

THE ROLE OF PASTORS' WIVES IN SUPPORT OF THEIR HUSBANDS'
MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY, JAMAICA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research topic is to identify the roles of pastors' wives in support of their husbands' ministry in the Church of God of Prophecy in St. Catherine, East Jamaica. The pastor's wife is viewed as that individual who supports the pastor physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The research will look at the pastor's wife who within the Jamaican context is seen as a full-time partner in what is considered the most important work on earth, and one who is also seen as being responsible for her husband's success or failure. The research will be conducted using two instruments, a questionnaire and focus group study, to get feedback from pastors' wives in various stages of ministry, church, and personal experiences. I will use supportive arguments present throughout the review of literature which shows the role of the pastor's wife and its development over the years.

The researcher strongly believes that having assessed the research findings, the appropriate support mechanisms can be developed to assist these wives to soar above their challenges and walk in their calling with purpose.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

The problems faced today in being a pastor's wife are not new occurrences but were the same issues that were faced by pastors' wives in the 1950s and possibly before. H. B. London and Neil Wiseman in their contribution said:

Through 2,000 years of Christian history, the role of the minister's mate has changed often, and it continues to change rapidly. Even in a single ten or fifteen year period, variations have often moved from caring companion to hearth keeper to resident sacrifice to spiritual sustainer to ministry partner to energetic helpmeet to institutional church leader to deputy pastor. But whatever direction the minister's wife's role tilts at any moment of human history, it always involves a position of trusted support for the work of ministry. And it is always an invaluable asset in the service of the kingdom.¹

The view of pastors could have been based on their early formation. Raymond Black, who became a licensed minister in the church in 1959, wrote a book entitled *The Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP) Pastor: Practical Pastoral Principles*.² In it he made a statement that grabbed my attention: "The life of a pastor's wife is open to the public, and both she and the pastor will always need to remember this . . . The way some pastors treat their wives, one would think they were looking for a vacation and their wives were the last resort."³ Here is a God-called and dedicated pastor who served for twenty years in upwards of five congregations, and his sole purpose in writing this book was to give some guidelines and problem-solving resolutions for the young, progressive pastor.

¹H. B. London Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *Married to a Pastor's Wife* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books/SP Publications, 1995), 22.

²Hereafter referred to as the Church of God of Prophecy.

³Raymond L. Black, *The Church of God of Prophecy Pastor: Practical Pastoral Principles* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1977)), 51.

Today, in our Jamaican context the pastor's wife is seen as a full-time partner in what is considered the most important work on earth, and she is responsible for her husband's success or failure. It was not difficult proving pastoral work as the most important work, as one pastor said, "The Church and Ministry were my first priorities. I was sold out for God."⁴ The conditions were challenging with very little remuneration if any. The pastor's mode of transportation was a bicycle, and the wives were very instrumental in this ministry journey. "We rode bicycles and conducted Sunday Schools after church service . . . and set up missions in nooks and crannies in the parish."⁵ To augment these services and street meetings, battery-operated public address systems and steel horns transported by pushed hand carts were used. This has been the hallmark of a great pioneering work in the parish of St. Catherine East, Jamaica. Glazier's analysis of the Jamaican churches is quite on target when he purports that they were "fiercely independent, they were initiated by Jamaicans, and they are controlled by Jamaicans . . . its Jamaican form is a genuine expression of emerging Jamaican needs, values and sentiments."⁶

The COGOP chronicles in the United States of America, Cleveland, Tennessee, to be exact, and is the second largest Pentecostal church in Jamaica. The church in Jamaica had an interesting beginning, as the first missionary appointed to Jamaica by Bishop Ambrose J. Tomlinson, General Overseer, never arrived on the island. The first church was organized ninety-four years ago (1923) in the district of Dalvey, in the Eastern Parish

⁴Enoch Sanford Cornwall and Kadiana Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence: The Inspiring Journey into the Life and Ministry of Bishop Enoch Cornwall* (Kingston, Jamaica: Lithomedia Printers, 2012), 32.

⁵Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 90.

⁶Stephen D. Glazier, ed., *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980).

of St. Thomas, and there are members who testified about attending this church. To date there seems to be a phantom church planter, as no known name is ever given as to the founder of this first church.

Evangelizing and preaching in churches without being licensed was the norm. The sign for readiness was identifying the call of God on one's life. "In 1930, Bishop Smith started preaching in the Whitfield Town area which subsequently led to the establishment of a church at 2-4 Moore Street, and this is in the heart of the city of Kingston. This address was to serve as the registered offices of the church for 20 years." "This group led by Bishop Smith was registered as the Bible Church of God which was later changed to the Church of God of Prophecy."

The work in Jamaica grew significantly under Bishop Rudolph Clifford Smith, who was appointed national overseer by Tomlinson. Bishop Lesmon R. Graham, former overseer (1982–1992), said, "Brother Smith was invited to the 30th General Assembly of 1935. Despite arriving in Cleveland, Tennessee, the day after the close of the Assembly, he was ordained a Bishop in the Church of God and appointed as National Overseer of Jamaica by Bishop Tomlinson."⁷

Under Bishop Smith's leadership the COGOP was organized in the fourteen parishes in the island and the church today is a potent force on Jamaica's spiritual landscape. Bishop Smith was also instrumental in "instituting the Parish Overseer leadership structure."⁸ Based on his instrumentality the church invaded the political

⁷Lesmon Graham, "A Concise Account of Appointments of the National Overseers," Service to Honor National Overseers (October 20, 2008), 17.

⁸Program for Service to Honor National Overseers. Profiles of National Overseers in Jamaica, 1931–2008, Compiled by the National Head Office COGOP Jamaica, 29. This was taken from a commemorative program for a special service to honor national overseers and in the profile written on Bishop Rudolph C. Smith.

boundaries with the attendance of the then Governor General of Jamaica, “notable statesman, Sir Clifford Campbell.”⁹ Considering that there were many members who saw politics as worldly and sinful, Bishop Smith concluded, “political boundaries—not to play such a part but to show that Christianity as presented by the Church of God is here to unify the nation.”¹⁰

The very religious culture imbued in the Jamaican people stems from a Creole religion. Creole religion includes the accommodation of African and European beliefs and traditions. In Caribbean Creole religions, spiritual power is internalized and mobilized in human beings who through the experience of possession burst out in singing and dancing along with clapping and drumming while choruses are sung. Clinton Clark, in his thought on African religion and culture, says:

When Christianity, unencumbered by its various foreign cultural expressions, encounters another living religion and culture as it does in African Pentecostalism, a transformation takes place in both directions. The Christian message challenges, confronts, and changes whatever seems incongruous or inadequate in African popular religion and cultural practices, and African religion and culture transform and enrich the Christian message so that it is understandable and relevant within the worldview in which it is submerged.¹¹

This is along the same line as Glazier when he speaks about the introduction of Pentecostalism into the Jamaican culture as “a continuation of traditional Jamaican religion.”¹²

Jamaican culture is pervasively Christian, says Glazier. This, he says, “is built upon a West African world view emphasizing group participation, healing, divination,

⁹Graham, *Profiles of National Overseers of Jamaica, 1931–2008*, 29.

¹⁰Graham, *Profiles of National Overseers of Jamaica, 1931–2008*, 29.

¹¹Clifton Clarke, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, vol. 6 of African Christian Studies series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 168.

¹²Glazier, *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, 37.

spiritual protection and possession.”¹³ The Jamaican church has not moved away from what Pentecostalism scholar and spiritual father of the COGOP, Bishop Hector Ortiz, calls “Mother Church.” Throughout the history of the church there was never a time when the charismatic movement of the Spirit was not a part of the life of the church. The church is still driven by the belief in the Supreme Being and belief in the Bible.

There are Christians in the COGOP who also believe that there are evil spirits and the ability of people to cast malevolent curses on the basis of envy. In Jamaica our spirituality is strongly affected by what we believe outside of the Bible. The African influence is very strong and cannot be divorced from our spirituality. The Pentecostal ethos in Jamaica is fueled by the need for a better life and a status of respect for self and others. Every believer has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and I believe that they all have the capability and the power necessary to live the copious life that the Savior has promised us.

The religious tradition rests on the teaching that being a Christian is indeed the answer to a life of better values which is made possible through identifying with Christ, and this is what identifies us as Pentecostals. Glazier said, “Pentecostalism has also come to play important roles in the social system. It flourishes in Jamaica because it has been indigenized by Jamaicans, modified according to the Jamaican religious tradition.”¹⁴ “The whole ethos of religion in Jamaica has become imbued with Pentecostalism, with both Revival churches and orthodox churches adopting elements of it and all three

¹³Glazier, *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, 36.

¹⁴Glazier, *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, 41, 43.

coming closer together. Indeed, it is getting increasingly more difficult to distinguish a Revival church from a Pentecostal church.”¹⁵

However, amid the traditions of revivalism and the varied African retentions, the COGOP Jamaica is a Bible-believing church, believing in healing in the atonement. When it comes to healing “they never thought of making themselves of the same class by resorting to the physicians and medicine.”¹⁶ The Christian life on this island is one of faith and a belief in a God who never fails. It is with this background that the researcher uses this medium to identify the underlying purpose for the behavior of the wives of the pastors in St. Catherine East, Jamaica.

The Problem

In the midst of all these practices are some passionate Jamaican women who regardless of their personal, communal, and organizational issues are willing to give of themselves for ministry. However, they are oftentimes crippled by fear and uncertainty due to their lack of understanding of the expectations of the church. The continued expectations of congregations as they relate to the traditional role of women within the religious life of their husbands has only resulted in wives who are frustrated and stressed and have even become burned out over time.

In the eyes of the church and the community, sharing in the religious life of a pastor husband is high status. This is far from the Jamaican context, where even with a working husband outfitting the children for school and making the house presentable for

¹⁵Stanley M. Burgess and Ed van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), Kindle ed., loc. 6374.

¹⁶A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, vol. 1 of The Church of God Movement Heritage series (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing, 2011), 67.

visits from members or community folks is the wife's responsibility both financially and physically. This is where the Jamaican parlance says, the dollar would have to stretch like elastics, but often times it is the mental capacity of the wife that is stretched.

The questioning facial features of some wives speak to self-inflicted wounds from past hurts and unfair decisions. Ministers' wives are engulfed by trepidation as a result of a church culture in which congregants put them in a category beyond that of regular human beings. As a pastor's wife it is an unpardonable sin to even make an error; likewise one's children are to have perfect behavior. The unfortunate situation where the daughter of the pastor gets pregnant out of wedlock is still calculated as the fault of the wife. The wife in former years is put on the back bench and today she is not fit for active ministerial appointments, while the husband continues in ministry unaffected. The Jamaican church must accept the fact that individuals are still being marginalized based on errors made by another family member who is not even a covenanted member of the body. The COGOP had over the years internationally and nationally managed to build churches but have failed somewhat to build people.

In the midst of their loud cry of abandonment from husbands who are too busy to fulfill the personal needs of wives, the pastors' wives in Jamaica still serve wherever they are needed in the church. Notwithstanding, a stigma still exists where in some parishes brothers refuse to accept a female as their pastor, and this is borne out in the lack of support from some men in churches that are pastored by females.

A demonstration of this stigma can be seen in one of my experiences, wherein I saw a female leader in this parish refusing to meet with a bishop because of his inference that he will never sit under the leadership or preaching of a female pastor. Apart from the

statement being partial, it clearly speaks to the fact that women are not seen in the light of the Scriptures and this has left residues of destruction.

Ministry throughout the island and specifically for this research in the parish of St. Catherine East has been an eye-opener for the researcher. The sheepish and lackluster behavior of the wives of pastors signals frustration. Yet these Jamaican pastors lead ministries, hold conferences, and give vibrant reports in conventions. This is the motivation behind the researcher: to investigate the role of the pastor's wife in the whole scheme of things. The researcher has faced ministry challenges that were insurmountable without succumbing under church pressure. The researcher strongly believes that this atmosphere of gloom that hangs over these capable Jamaican born-again women based on their mindset will change because the researcher's approach is deliberate.

It is the culture of the Jamaican churches, and the thirty-nine in St. Catherine East are no different, to refer to the wife of the national overseer as "first lady" or the "leading lady." This soon became reciprocal to every pastor's wife, both parish and local. Within that same culture are the socio-emotional problems experienced by the pastors' wives that accompany this given title. It is the view of many that becoming a pastor's wife is an elevation to a higher social status. This thinking originates from the belief systems of both church and community which significantly affect especially the wives of pastors who themselves are quite uncertain about the will of God for their lives.

The Ministry Policy Manual recommends that two appreciation services are to be held for the pastor annually, or at least one. These services are so planned with the pastor's family in mind, and note "in mind," as the wives along with children, if any, are mentioned in only one line of a two- to three-page citation. The wife often sits through a

service of two to three hours simply going through the motions. I had a conversation with a female pastor of one of the churches in St. Catherine East, particularly for the purpose of this research, and Pastor Jones said:

It is believed that women will never be accepted in the church in certain capacities. Under certain leadership, within the parish as well as local church women are not given any prominence. Most times the woman is not even mentioned even though they do everything. Most successful ministries happen based on the wife's support. Culture in the Prophecy Church is a harsh one as it relates to a pastor's wife.¹⁷

She even shared a situation that happened in her congregation where a sister hid her hurt for years to save the church because she was the wife of the pastor.

In an interview with one of the administrative assistants to the national overseer, he shared a little about one of the rural churches within the area he supervises. He said the church was run by two female evangelists who were not licensed but were the preachers for ten years in the 1960s. He said that then National Overseer R. C. Smith assigned them with specific instructions to send 10% of the tithes and offerings collected to the national office and the balance they should keep for themselves. They served the congregation and the community with distinction. They were later replaced by a licensed male minister, and today one of those female preachers is still alive and was never licensed. Vinson Synan seemed to have looked in the Jamaican window when he said, "When a congregation became financially viable, these leaders felt it necessary to give the leadership of the congregation to a male minister who would have to depend on the church finances to support his family."¹⁸

¹⁷Personal interview with a female pastor of a church in St. Catherine East (Jones is used in place of her real name).

¹⁸Vinson Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011), 383.

One female pastor said, “If you are not very strong, the men will lead you as they believe they must always give the directives. I went to a zone meeting and it seemed a complete waste of time as whenever one of the sisters spoke there was no response. It was quite clear that the men felt threatened by the sister’s input.”¹⁹

I can testify at this juncture that I have made it to this point of studies because my husband, who is also my pastor, has given me wings to fly. I served with my husband for approximately twenty-five years, and during this period I served as associate pastor along with him for six years. At one of our national conventions I sat while appointments were being done by the national overseer and heard my husband named as pastor for another church. While that was shocking, what was most disappointing was when another minister was named as his associate pastor with no consideration about my feeling or even if I would have had any financial challenges considering I was given a meager but needed stipend. This was not considered a big problem; therefore, there were no specific programs in place to deal with a hurting wife. This involvement and experience in ministry has taught me overtime when to stand up and be counted, when to stand by in my supportive role, and when to stand down. This cannot be said by many of the pastors’ wives in Jamaica. This has resulted in many of the breakdowns in the pastor/wife/family relationships. This signals the researcher’s crucial reason for the commencement of this study.

The ethos of the Jamaican people is one with a fighting spirit. This is not surprising as within the Jamaican historical tradition is the indomitable courage drawn from a background of slave revolts. I therefore believe that these women, with help from

¹⁹Personal interview with Pastor Levy, church in St. Catherine East, July 2017.

their spouses, direction and opportunities from specially developed programs and a willingness to re-learn, can grow, and develop to their full potential.

The national women's ministries program is so packaged to boost missionary offerings but has also attempted to address some of the aforementioned issues. There is an annual national women's ministry conference held the last weekend in October where every woman would be ministered to, the aim of which is self-development as well for serving in ministry. The Women's Ministry Department in St. Catherine East has a vibrant ministry; however, a more deliberate effort needs to be made by having wholesome confrontations as regards the issues which are quite personal and in some cases noticeable. I can speak specifically about the Jamaican church in this regard. Without even realizing it, this cultural norm is the cause of interpersonal and human problems which affect family life and the community relationships within the churches as well.

I was the assigned person from the planning committee for a conference for pastors' wives to make personal calls to the wives in St. Catherine East and the adjoining parish of St. Catherine West. This conference came about as a result of my many hurts as a female minister and pastor's wife. The telephone calls provided a forum which exposed issues that lay dormant for years where wives bore the pressure to conform to unreasonable expectations within and without the church but refused to talk about it and refused to agree to counseling. It can be concluded that as a result of what is seen, the approach taken by leadership has administered many negative effects on wives who with all their inner gifting and abilities remain silent about issues and the decisions of their husbands which prove detrimental to ministries and by extension the organization.

Failure in ministry has proven detrimental to both the spiritual and physical growth of the congregation. Women are not allowed to speak out in some rural churches. One of the contributory factors is the very public nature of the life of the pastor's wife, which is always open to public scrutiny. It was my experience as a pastor's wife that showed me that everyone had a perception of what a pastor's wife should be and not necessarily who God made her to be.

In conversation with a pastor's wife, Dianne Finkelde, the conversation started with the phrase:

"You know you are the pastor's wife," and one wife ended the sentence with "when . . . you are introduced to someone as 'this is our pastor's wife,' leaving you without personal identity or name."²⁰ "I guess you hear pastors' wives talk about the mask they wear, because sometimes it definitely feels like that." "I feel like a role is being introduced rather than me as the person."²¹

The issues are plenty and the hurts are real in local churches, and Finkelde's experience is common to the wives in the Jamaican church. The pastor's wife is easily identifiable by face, but the majority of the congregations have little knowledge of who is behind the face. The obstacles faced in our churches and especially in leadership are great. Garnett Roper, in looking at the challenge for leaders, said, "There are no easy answers. These are extraordinary times. And extraordinary times demand extraordinary leadership."²²

²⁰Dianne Finkelde, *Conversations with a Pastor's Wife: Timeless Stories Exploring the Challenges of Ministry Life* (Amazon Digital Services, 2015), foreword, loc. 98.

²¹Finkelde, *Conversations with a Pastor's Wife*, loc. 98.

²²Garnett L. Roper and J. Richard Middleton, eds., *A Kairos Moment for Caribbean Theology: Ecumenical Voices in Dialogue* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 130.

Historical Perspective

The COGOP business guide includes recommendations and practices representing the report of the Questions and Subject Committee, which gave birth to what were described as auxiliaries or Helps and Government. These auxiliaries were also referred to as departments.

The Women's Missionary Band (WMB) was one such department that provided supplementary help and support to each local church as approved by the pastor. The General Overseer, A. J. Tomlinson, in his nineteenth annual address in 1929, recommended the following: "In order to assist in the propagation of this yet-to-be-mighty institution, and to more fully complete the organization, I am going to recommend that this Assembly make provisions for the appointment of a woman missionary secretary as an assistant to the General Overseer, whose duties shall be to write inspirational messages and to encourage the work of the local band."²³ However, such work and messages were always to be subject to the approval of the general overseer.

The Ministry Policy Manual of the COGOP also outlines preparation for the convening of a business conference and instructs that the platform is to be occupied by the moderator, clerk, and treasurer, with the male members seated nearby. The female members are to be seated close by as a prayer group. This structure does not negate the fact that "the success of the Church of God depends upon the noble calling of the

²³A. J. Tomlinson, *General Assembly Annual Addresses, 1928–1943*, vol. 3 of The Church of God Movement Heritage series (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 2011), 50.

ministry and the men and women who filled the positions of bishops, deacons, evangelists and teachers.”²⁴

The church historian for the COGOP, Bishop Adrian L. Varlack Sr., shared with me what the church deemed openness to women ministers. He said several women were appointed in the early assemblies to different countries as missionaries; however, these women would have carried a restricted license as a female evangelist. Their roles entailed administrative duties such as reporting, by keeping the general overseer informed about the progress of the work. He further divulged that these women also performed spiritual functions such as preaching, teaching, and informal counseling but were never allowed to baptize, administer the Lord’s Supper, add people to the church, or conduct business conferences. These other functions had to be done by a male minister or specifically under his auspices.

Varlack also mentioned appointments made at the church’s international level:

- A woman, Mittie Lee Adams from Mississippi, was appointed during the year to head the “Victory Leaders Band at the Twenty-Eighth Assembly, September 13-19, 1933.”²⁵ This position, Varlack said, today would be the equivalent of what we call the International Youth Director.
- Several missionaries (women) were appointed in the early assemblies when missionary appointments to a country were the equivalent of an

²⁴James Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1977), 171.

²⁵Buford M. Johnson, *Eighty-two General Assemblies of the Church of God of Prophecy, 1906–1987: A Concise History of Church Progress* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1971), 59.

overseer. They were as follows, under the leadership of Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, General Overseer, 1903–1943:

Eliza V. Martin, Missionary	Barbados	1935–1941
Mary H. Ryan	Montserrat	1935–1943

- Those appointed under M. A. Tomlinson, General Overseer, 1943–1990:

Mary H. Ryan	Montserrat	1944–1947
Rebecca Cisco	New Zealand	1952–1955

The COGOP Jamaica recognizes that the human dimension of the church and its dynamics of leadership are dependent on the Spirit's leading. "The human dimension of the church and its accompanying theology, structures, leadership roles, methods, systems and programs are always subject to review and revision as the Spirit leads, guides, and reveals the practical implementation and effects of God's Kingdom reign as outlined in the Scriptures."²⁶

This was evident in the church's new paradigm for the twenty-first century. The need for administrative changes in church operations leads to the following new approaches to the ministries of teaching and preaching. Women are now acknowledged in the preaching and teaching ministries of the church. This is done on the basis of the calling being identified in the individual's life. The individual is then "set forth by a local church and, after meeting the usual ministerial requirements within a specified time frame be examined by the national/regional/state and International Offices for issuance of a Minister's license." "It was decided that women who are qualified and feel the call to

²⁶ Adrian L. Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future, Foundations* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 2010), 116.

the work given in Romans 16:2 in connection with Acts 6:3, which indicates that she is a female deacon and her work similar to a deacon, should be appointed by the church to minister.”²⁷

The Jamaican Historical Perspective

While the church in Jamaica wholeheartedly accepts this policy, the church operates with a particular belief system which is grounded on its socio-cultural and historical context. The Ministry Policy Manual of the COGOP outlines that female members are to be seated close by as a prayer group. Vinson Synan in *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* shared the following statistics: “In the Pentecostal Holiness Church, which ordained women from the beginning, no less than 17% of all licensed and ordained ministers in 1992 were women. Two churches that continued to deny women’s right to pastor were the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) and the Church of God in Christ, both of which allowed women to serve as evangelists but not as pastors or church official.”²⁸ History continues to play a great part in behaviors and has had a negative impact on individuals and in the case of this study, women.

It is quite interesting to note the Seventh Day Adventist Church’s attitude as expressed by a female leader about the supportive wives of ministers. In the testimonies of Ellen G. White it is penned:

Some of them are no help to their husbands, yet they profess the third angel’s message. I saw that some of them take so willful and selfish a course that Satan makes them his instruments and works through them to destroy the influence and usefulness of their husbands. The minister’s wife who is not devoted to God is no

²⁷Church of God of Prophecy, 2016 *Ministry Policy Manual: Reflects Rulings Through 2016 International Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 2016), 93.

²⁸Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), Kindle ed., loc. 2003.

help to her husband. While he dwells upon the necessity of bearing the cross and urges the importance of self-denial, the daily example of his wife often contradicts his preaching and destroys its force. In this way she becomes a great hindrance and often leads her husband away from duty and from God. She does not realize what a sin she is committing.²⁹

In the Pentecostal circle this thinking might have been described as harsh. Amid having their distinct personalities and strengths, pastors' wives are women who also have weaknesses. Ecumenism has woven together the faith community in bringing us together in a minister's fraternal or meetings held by churches' umbrella groups and from discussions can swing the pendulum completely to another side of the spectrum. The involvement of Jamaican women in evangelism and church planting was never prevented by any means. Women, and this includes pastors' wives, were in the forefront but were not called pastors, neither were they allowed to do the ordinances. The willingness of the sisters to go where they were sent was based on the Jamaican watchword taken from Heb 13:17 (New King James Version): "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

There were battles to fight from a personal point of view, to that of separation from friend and families. However, these women did the rethinking and rearrangement of life necessary to fulfill their calling. *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements* in its brief survey on classical Pentecostals (which includes COGOP) said, "Men and women shared leadership responsibilities. The barrier between

²⁹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1 (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 137, 450.

clergy and laity vanished, since participants believed that the endowment with spiritual power for ministry was intended to be received by all.”³⁰

The Traditional Jamaican Model

At the beginning of Bishop Enoch Cornwall’s tenure as parish overseer for the parish of St. Catherine East, he supervised forty-three organized churches. Bishop Cornwall wrote, “by the time I had left I had organized ten more in the eight years that I spent there in that capacity.”³¹ Some of these churches were started as missions in the homes of women. The Cocoa Walk Church of God of Prophecy, St. Catherine, “started as a small Mission by a Sister Facey in her living room.”³² What were initially prayer meetings and Bible studies grew considerably so that “Sister Facey commenced construction of a wooden building on her property, sited directly in front of her house after which the church was organized.”³³ Sister Facey after a few years was appointed pastor of that local church and served until her retirement on account of ill health.

The Riversdale church was started by Bishop Cornwall and was without a permanent venue until one of the members, Sister Easy, consented for the church to be built on her property. Another of the missions, now the COGOP, Waterloo, was started by a member affectionately called Mother Lamb.

The Merryland Church was organized by a brother and shortly after pastored by Sister Davis. Sister Davis was also sent to pastor a nearby mission at a place called Gut’s Hill. Sister Davis, along with her husband, who is a pastor, “alternated their visits

³⁰Burgess, and van der Maas, *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, loc. 241.

³¹Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 96.

³²Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 97.

³³Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 98.

between both churches . . . and in quick succession started plans to relocate from that small district to a larger community in order to generate growth.”³⁴

The National Property and Convention site at 41 Old Harbour Road was acquired under Bishop Cornwall’s purview with the help of the members from one of the nearby churches. The location also houses the 41 Old Harbour Road local church, which was the fastest growing church in Jamaica at that time. It is of interest to note that the evangelizing team and the founding members of this local assembly were “three sisters from one family and three couples.”³⁵

As was mentioned earlier by Varlack and confirmed in the Ministry Manual, women were to keep the general overseer and, in Jamaican parlance, island overseer, informed about the progress of the work but were never allowed to baptize, administer the Lord’s Supper, add people to the church, or conduct business conferences. These women also performed spiritual functions such as preaching and teaching, and all other functions had to be done by a male minister or specifically under his auspices. Some of this continues even today; however, the church has benefitted from decisions made by sisters that affect the critical progressive move of the work positively.

Jamaica’s Early Administration

“In 1935 Bishop R. C. Smith was appointed Island Overseer and held the first official meeting of all ministers and leaders in the very parish of which the researcher is focusing, at 22 Oxford Road, Spanish Town, St. Catherine.”³⁶ Most of the churches were

³⁴Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 102.

³⁵Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 102.

³⁶Lesmon Graham, *History of National Convention in Jamaica*, Church of God of Prophecy, Jamaica, 75th National Convention (April 2017), 46.

supervised by women, as Smith, the island overseer, sent them to rural communities to start preaching. He consented to pay their accommodation cost for six months, after which they were mandated to grow their churches so that they could sustain themselves from the tithes and offerings.

Another of the early national overseers was Alvin Moss, who came from the Bahamas and served the church in Jamaica from 1974 to 1982. Bishop Moss gave directives for two females to go to the rural areas and preach. The sisters operated under the title “leader.” This was certainly not common to Jamaica only, and without any doubt there is a place in the church for women. As Synan shared about the movement’s inception: “Leaders generally gave women freedom to ‘dig out’ or plant new congregations and nurture them to the point of viability. Women were also often encouraged to take on congregations that were at the point of failing and use their gifts for preaching, evangelism, and administration to rebuild them to the point that they became self-sustaining.”³⁷

Once per month the parish overseer would visit, preach the sermon on that Sunday, and collect the tithes and offerings. The parish overseer was technically the appointed pastor of the church. Bishop Enoch Cornwall, Parish Overseer Emeritus, is still alive and pastoring in the Central Parish of Manchester. In his early years he was the appointed pastor for eight churches. As is the custom, eight female leaders were assigned to preach and do administrative duties while Bishop Cornwall, the appointed district overseer, visited at six-month intervals. During these periods of visitation, the tithes and offerings that were gathered for the period would be collected and taken to the national office, along with a written report. The visit of the district overseer was always welcomed

³⁷Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 383.

by the church leader and congregation. It was an opportunity for the members to show their appreciation in gifts.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were therefore decided upon based on the monthly or six-month period when the district overseer would visit. Where churches were within reasonable proximity there would be a joint baptism and this would culminate in a community affair. The celebrations would take the format of a march to the nearest beach or river where the only sound system (not necessarily owned by a member but a community person) would be in operation. The involvement of community persons is always an opportunity for eunuch baptism, which is one of the highlights. At the end of the baptism the members showed their appreciation by giving gifts in the form of ground provisions (yam, banana, breadfruit)—whatever was the crop farmed at that time. No wonder William Wedenoja in writing about the Pentecostal movement in Jamaica said, "In many Jamaican communities Pentecostal churches are the only group beyond the family, and they act as community centers in providing leadership, entertainment, and a forum for the expression and formulation of public opinion, sponsoring local events and serving as agencies for social control and social welfare."³⁸

The Call Within the Call

Bishop Cornwall is a proud spiritual father who served the parish of St. Catherine East for eight years with humility and distinction, averaging one church per year. He had the support of the pastors in carrying out what was clearly the vision God gave him. There is sure to be a big question in the minds of the researcher's readers. In research that

³⁸Glazier, *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, 41.

has embarked on the support of pastors' wives in their ministry, where is Sister Cornwall in this descriptive ministry journey? It began like any love story:

I met a lovely young girl from Bois Content (St. Catherine) named Louise Elizabeth Johnson. Full of life and energy at the age of twenty-five I courted her and we got married on October 1, 1960. We had a good family life. My wife was very attentive and took care of the house and family. This wonderful woman was full of promise and anticipation of good things to come, happiness and sweetness. But I was soon to know and experience what God meant when He said in Isaiah chapter 48 verse 10, "I have refined thee, though not as silver, I have refined thee in the furnace of affliction." My wife became ill and her illness challenged me in every sense of the word, my body, spirit, emotions, finances, manhood and my very being and still more. My wife was taken to Dr. Oddley who explained that this was a family illness brought on by childbearing.³⁹

Sister Cornwall is still sick today, still going in and out of the hospital. Bishop Cornwall is supported by his three children and church family. His daily chores include washing, cooking, and doing the shopping. Bishop Cornwall shares that "when the children were growing up I became an expert in combing hair. I would take them to school, attend Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and was elected the PTA President at McCauley's All Age School."⁴⁰ The tables had turned and roles were switched by unforeseen circumstances. The roles of the pastor's wife became the responsibilities of a good father, a good husband, and a committed child of God. To this he said, "I wonder why I was chosen by God to minister to my wife in this manner."⁴¹

Holy Spirit Appointments

The Jamaican culture is steeped in the belief that the Holy Spirit is the head of the church. Varlack, in *Church of God of Prophecy*, said, "The government and

³⁹Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 83-84.

⁴⁰Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 85.

⁴¹Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 85.

organizational practices of the Church must be viewed in large part as a living dynamic under the guidance and control of the Holy Ghost rather than simply as a static set of fixed forms and inflexible, unchangeable.”⁴²

Everything hinges on the leading of the Holy Spirit and begins with the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This ethos has skewed people’s interpretation of the necessity of this encounter and its foundational values to the advancement of the church’s work. An ethos which will also speak to emotion and spiritedness which presents an opening for injustices based on wrong decisions or decisions that were not based on the Spirit’s leading. Parker said, “A people for whom the leading of the Spirit is so important must have means for discerning what is of the Spirit’s leading and what is not.”⁴³ Discernment, then termed as being able to see, was never the priority; it was speaking in tongues that mattered most, as this signals one readiness for ministry.

One female who felt the call on her life is an example of the trust that Bishop Smith placed in women. Pearline Lawrence became a member of the COGOP in June 1969 in what she termed was a Holy Ghost experience. One fateful morning while she was combing her hair she heard the door open; “the image of a man in the fog of a cloud spoke to her.” “I am the Lord and if you take the uttermost part of the earth I’m there.” Six months after becoming a member of the church she was appointed band leader by Bishop Smith and soon after started the Cassava Piece Church. The church started with three children and grew to more than one hundred members.

⁴²Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy*, 89.

⁴³Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*, expanded ed. (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 4.

As the Caribbean constituency seeks to interpret the meaning of the gospel in the Jamaican context, the inclusion of women with the authority to speak out in the name of God became the framing device for the pastors' wives conference. The conference, of which I am the director, now ministers to approximately 250 women biennially. During the tenure of Bishop Lesmon R. Graham as overseer for Jamaica in 1982, his wife, Viola Graham, introduced along with the national counseling program "retreats for males and females together which laid the foundation for the well-established ladies retreats." General retreats for both sexes and male and female unsaved are traditional events. This solidifies the need of the exploration of this topic and the emphasis of the conference, which is not only for a getaway. It is to develop the habits of spirituality and the abilities and disciplines to nurture and improve personal skills. The wives of our pastors will eventually be able to offer direction and training to other women in our congregations and beyond. My spiritual formation that is steeped in prayer, study, and exegesis of the Word and worship has helped me in living a sustained spiritual life which has groomed me to be an example to others.

Conclusion

Over the past thirty or more years ministry has changed on both fronts, for males as well as females, and females in this instance speaks to pastors' wives. "We are living in a time when the traditional pastor's wife's mold is being broken and moving from a 'one size fits all' to a model which is unique to the individual woman in accordance with her gifting, passions, season of life, financial situation and church culture."⁴⁴ The real

⁴⁴Finkelde, *Conversations with a Pastor's Wife*, loc. 60.

challenge is not being a pastor's wife but living as a child of God while coping with the many situations in a manner that is pleasing to him.

The women in St. Catherine East and the country at large have been instrumental in getting most of our biggest and most modern buildings here in Jamaica constructed. The supervision of community collaborations and welfare programs by women is extremely effective and successful, especially those relating to family situations.

Minister Yvonne McFarlane, pastor and church accountant, was instrumental in implementing and building up the camping ministry for more than thirty years, and this ministry now celebrates more than forty years. Minister McFarlane also started the first teens' program in Jamaica, "Teen Team." Each local church in this parish operates a teens' ministry, and they have adopted nursing homes and children's wards in some hospitals, to name a few of the ongoing projects.

There are a total of forty-three pastors in the parish, and of that amount twenty-one are females. Women have been able in many instances to move a stagnant church on a more rapid basis. These women who serve alongside their husbands have developed the pastoral craft in a significant way and have been able to transition into the pastoral ministry when their husband retires or dies. The stewardship of the wives in the harvest field is unquestionable. There is a place in the church, and wives must recognize the endless opportunities that are available for their unique ministry to their husband and the congregation. The pastor's wife can become a model for others. Robert Anderson believes that "the pastor's wife should remind herself that her effort is part of an overall

church program and that she is working as part of a team, not only with her husband but also with the total membership of the congregation.”⁴⁵

The wife’s supportive role to her husband and by extension her overall contribution to family, church, and community is dependent on her relationship with Christ. Her spiritual maturity will guide her conduct as it relates to her relationship with her husband, as well as her relationship with other women. This is indicated in Paul’s discourse in 1 Tim 3 as he addresses the wives of the men who were called into leadership. The underlying goal of this thesis is to provide a framework for teaching women who are preparing for ministry and to provide guidelines to pastors’ wives who are already in ministry. I therefore concur with Synan as I think about the future of the pastor’s wives in St. Catherine East, Jamaica, when he says in ministry there are women:

Convinced that they had experienced an undeniable call of God to the ministry and leadership of the church refused to take a backseat. They acted on their Pentecostal beliefs that . . . women were equally empowered by God through Holy Spirit Baptism . . . and moved with deliberation to create environments where they could be free to pursue their God-given call to ministry and leadership wholeheartedly.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Anderson, *Effective Pastor*, 72.

⁴⁶ Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 391.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The progression of thought in many of the books that address this subject shows a change in how the wives approach their position and functions. Most wives would agree that most of what is defined as the wives' role is more traditional instead of scriptural. She is given a character role that is scripted by tradition. That makes the role of a pastor's wife very difficult as she is advised by many books as well as articles what to do and even how to do it without the slightest inclination on her feelings on the matter and the impact it may have on her personal life.

Some of the writing on the subject is unrealistic and some idealistic. It is unrealistic because her participation is measured against her activities at church, which includes what is seen by the congregation as support to her husband. The congregation's ideal is that of a wife who is fitted with glitz and glamour. There is no consideration given to her role as wife, mother, housekeeper, and believer. The views are idealistic because a picture of indispensability is painted where there is a perfect individual fitting in the mold that the Jamaican culture describes as a wife that is good, nice, and sweet. In reality a pastor's wife and family are not this way, and what we have in some of these books are well constructed plots that make good reading.

There is a great need for ideals in the life of the pastor's wife, as is communicated by some literature. Some of the characteristics mentioned in these writings, however, do not leave any place for growth. Instead they perpetuate a fabricated life of perfection in

all areas of the wife's life. Although in a sense some of the writings are superficial, the wives can benefit from some readings which serve a real purpose by way of personal development and for ministry growth, as will be seen in some that will be cited.

There are differences among Christians over biblical interpretation as it relates to the role of women. However, this should not be allowed to destroy unity and fellowship within the faith. Aida Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad support this idea in declaring that "there is no substitute for risk and courage in situations that are oppressive or forbidding in their openness to the use of women's gifts."¹ The authors even address the need for a welcoming home faith community which will bridge the gap in what is interpreted as the uncomfortable displacements of women. This, they conclude, proves to be quite painful though to some extent can be considered spiritually and emotionally liberating. A large number of diverse denominations lend themselves to these moves.

However, within the Jamaican church culture members who leave their congregation are seen as backsliders. Rather than entering a meaningful discussion on the nature of the circumstances which resulted in the move, pastors welcome these members. While there is numerical growth quite often serious spiritual problems surface later. One of the paradoxes of Jamaican society is that the church inclusive of the COGOP continues to demand greater adherence to marriage and family life without accepting the truth that unmarried households are also the norm. For example, many of our local congregations are in Jamaican communities considered to be rural areas. The needs of the community women are satisfied within the context of a highly sexualized Jamaican culture.

¹Aida Besancon Spencer, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, *Global Voices on Biblical Equality: Women and Men Serving Together in the Church*, House of Prisca and Aquila series (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 207.

While some of the moves are as a result of oppression and non-recognition of women's giftedness, others are on the basis of the common behavior of indigenous churches to turn away unmarried women who are in relationships with men. The coin seemed to have flipped especially as it relates to the ethos of the COGOP Jamaica, which bears the concept of the church being a hospital where healing is provided for everyone. Katy Tangenberg said, "Wives and/or mothers who may feel pressured to conform to expectations of submission and high standards of parenting and home management. Fear of criticism or rejection can often prevent women from disclosing family or marital problems."² Within the confines of the walls of our churches here in Jamaica are wives who have lost their focus and the reason for why they are in ministry. The pastor's wife, once she has gained self-worth, can effectively intervene as the opportunities for her own ministry are unique and endless.

It is worthy of note and I greatly support and can identify with the commendation of the authors for women in their roles as being complementary to men; serving as CEOs, doctors, biblical scholars, and Olympic athletes. They maintain that women provide some of the contemporary female role models that influence many young women today.

Books, Part 1: Experiences of Pastors' Wives

These authors in this literary review clearly believe that women are God-designed and have been given talents that are virtually limitless in their power to change people. However, the behavior of wives seems to be affected by the Jamaican culture, which is a compartmentalization of English and African culture. The West African worldview

²Katy Tangenberg, "Culture, Social Relationships, and Self-Perceptions of Pentecostal Women," *International Social Work* 50, no. 2: (2007): 237-38.

which is steeped in our DNA does not only emphasize group participation but also speaks to the wives' role within in their homes, their communities, and by extension their nations. It is noticeable despite the difference in experiences mentioned in the books that there is unlimited potential for amazing accomplishments in ministry for these women and in many other areas of their lives.

Under the topic "African Pentecostalism and Gender Roles," Maria Frahm-Arp concluded that "the most important vocation for women is motherhood and being a stay-at-home homemaker, yet, at the same time, financial rewards through hard work at a paid job are regarded as a form of spiritual blessing."³ She continued:

Women are encouraged to understand their role as being the helpmate of their husbands and the ones who submit to their husbands, serving their families. At the same time, they are told not to devalue themselves or become self-abusive; they must remember that through Christ they are loosened from all the social, emotional, and spiritual chains of abuse, oppression, and destruction and should take care of themselves, pamper themselves, and value themselves.⁴

The Emotionally Healthy Leader (Peter Scazzero)

Scazzero's book, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, tells of a growing church and a wife who was tired of raising their four girls by herself. Her decision to quit the church caught her husband's attention. He then committed to lead out of the joy of his marriage. "And if I could not maintain the boundaries necessary to keep the pressure of church leadership from negatively impacting our marriage, I would gladly resign my position."⁵

Scazzero brings to light the importance of an emotionally and spiritually healthy leader, in order to have a positive effect on his congregation. Specifically for this thesis, I

³Clifton Clarke, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, vol. 6 of African Christian Studies series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 160.

⁴Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 160-61.

⁵Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 85.

will transpose the name “leader” to “pastor.” Being healthy consists of a sustainable rhythm of one’s life, and this rhythm is incomplete without a supportive wife. The New Oxford American Dictionary refers to rhythm as a harmonious sequence or correlation, and this I believe speaks to the pastor and wife relationship.

Marriage was instituted by God and as a result is sustainable through a relationship with Christ. However, one has got to guard against superficial spirituality. There can be ministry programs that are packed with many activities and yet the relationship with Christ is at its lowest. There needs to be a balance. The author realized this and immediately made a decision to change what could be interpreted as priority of ministry over marriage. His priority was based on his experience while attending a student mission conference where one of the speakers said, “If you are going to marry, make sure you marry someone who doubles your ministry and doesn’t cut it in half!”⁶ Scazzero left the conference with the understanding that his “priority in life was to extend the kingdom of God.”⁷ He therefore prayed for a woman who would double his impact, and Geri was the answer.

With a growing church, a wife and four daughters, something was about to suffer consciously or unconsciously, and it was his marriage. Geri’s decision to divorce was seen by her husband as lack of corporation and support. Geri did not divorce Peter; however, she left the church, and this certainly brought results. Peter Scazzero’s decision to join with his wife in leading out of their marriage resulted in a new dimension of relationship with Christ through study of the Word and reading available literature.

⁶Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 83.

⁷Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 83.

Scazzero is now at a place where he has a greater appreciation and understanding of what marriage is. He believes it is a calling which must inform our self-understanding. According to the *Psychology Dictionary*, self-understanding means to “attain the insight into your attitudes, motives, defenses, reactions, weaknesses and strengths.”⁸ After sharing his personal journey with its many struggles as a pastor, Scazzero’s awareness led him to offer as an assessment tool, a list of statements based on the decision to lead out of his marriage:

- “I see my marriage as a prophetic sign of God’s love for the church and the world.
- I consider the quality and integrity of my marriage as the most important gospel message I preach.
- I place the highest priority on investing time and energy to build a healthy marriage that reveals Christ’s love to the church and the world.
- I experience a direct connection between my oneness with Jesus and my oneness with my spouse.
- A key factor for me in discerning God’s will in major ministry initiatives is the impact it will have on my marriage.
- I am aware of how issues from my family of origin impact my ability to be emotionally available in a healthy way to my spouse as well as to those I serve.
- I do not over-function as a leader at the expense of my marriage.

⁸Pam Nugent, “Self-Understanding,” PsychologyDictionary.org, April 13, 2013, accessed June 19, 2017, <https://psychologydictionary.org/self-understanding/>.

- I make what is important to my spouse important to me regardless of my leadership responsibilities.
- The fruit I bear in ministry overflows out of the richness of my marriage.
- I am comfortable articulating a biblical vision for marrieds on how they serve to bear witness to God’s love.”⁹

This list includes the ideal characteristics to be possessed by a minister’s wife, but since that is not the case here in Jamaica and in truth nowhere else, it can be a goal worth working toward. The habit to hide one’s feelings, which is what is perceived of pastors’ wives, seems hard to explain since as Pentecostals, whether male or female, we all springs from an oral tradition. Sharing should be our forte as in the Jamaican domain women are teachers and disciplinarians. “Toulis (230) suggests that the power of women in the church is based on the strong role of mothers in Jamaican society.”¹⁰ He also suggests the following scale which represents that which best describes the individual’s response:

- ✓ “5 = Always true of me
- ✓ 4 = Frequently true of me
- ✓ 3 = Occasionally true of me
- ✓ 2 = Rarely true of me
- ✓ 1 = Never true of me”¹¹

⁹Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 88.

¹⁰Stanley M. Burgess and Ed van der Maas, eds., *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), Kindle ed., loc. 5946.

¹¹Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 88.

The scale could be a motivational tool for the many wives who continue to live in denial and continue to be a silent partner making little or no contribution to the day-to-day operations of the local church.

The Faith of the Pastor's Wife (Judith Hylton)

In *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, Judith Hylton writes from twenty-seven years of life experiences as the wife of a pastor. She comes from a good standpoint culturally, being Jamaican by birth also well informed from her vocation of being a marriage and family therapist. The book provides many practical examples in areas which are of great concern for many women who have to face the rigors that come on account of having a husband who has chosen ministry as his lifetime career. According to Hylton, "After 28 years of marriage, with almost twenty-seven of those years spent serving four different congregations, I want to share some of the lessons I have learned as the wife of a pastor."¹²

The pastorate is extremely demanding, and I speak from experience as well. To thrive as a pastor's wife in this atmosphere requires great faith along with guidance in the disciplines of prayer, parenting, and marriage. In 1992, my husband was appointed pastor for one of the local churches in the parish of Kingston and St. Andrew. Everything changed about the way we did things, and clearly my impression of ministry and my role as a wife also changed. In November 2010, my husband was appointed the national overseer for Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, French Guiana, and Guyana. Hylton speaks of the rigors of pastoral ministry, and this confirms the idea that some were called for

¹²Judith S. Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife: Surviving in Ministry yet Remaining in Love with God and His People*, Geneva Authors Shelf (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2012), 165.

special works, like leading from the front alongside one's partner in the pastoral ministry. This means that their assignments are very specific and often come with a tremendous price.

The book cautions that the life of a pastor's wife is not a make-believe situation but rather a real situation and life journey that is only possible through a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

In a product review posted by Christianbook.com, Hylton, when asked "What do you hope folks will gain from this project?"¹³ said:

They will be encouraged in their faith. They will be encouraged to stay in the ministry. There are many pastors' wives that I interviewed who felt they wished their husbands would leave the ministry because it is too stressful. I want them to understand the importance of their relationship with Christ and that this relationship is vital to their husband's call and the love of God's people. I pray they will see that being a pastor's wife is also a call. It is a great blessing even in the midst of the challenges.¹⁴

Hylton writes from the perspective of one who accepts her position as a person called by God, and one who loves God, her family, and God's people. She knows about the struggle to live an authentic Christian life and the lack of understanding of the members in many congregations. She has borne the pressures and experiences of unreasonable demands from members of the congregation. Yet she is still able to say, "I love God's people and I love the local church."¹⁵ As she continues to look at the challenges of pastoral vocation, Hylton shared the following: "54.4 percent of the wives believed that their husband's first priority is the church, and 36 percent pastors agreed. In this

¹³Review of *The Faith of a Pastor's Wife*, Christianbook.com, accessed June 19, 2017, <https://www.christianbook.com/faith-pastors-surviving-ministry-remaining-people/judith-hylton/9781449760335/pd/760335?event=ESRCN|M>.

¹⁴Review of Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*.

¹⁵Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, 165.

framework a survey placing clergy divorces as the third highest among professional people is not too surprising.”¹⁶

Every pastor’s wife has her own unique story. While there are similarities with the experiences of many pastors’ wives, their responses to the situations are often different, and so they write their own unique story. This is evident in a comparison of Peter and Geri Scazzero’s story and that of Hylton; there is a vast contrast in Geri’s approach and response to the challenges faced with her husband being pastor and that of Hylton. Peter spoke excitedly of a growing congregation, the poor being served, the homeless fed, and new churches being planted. Peter thought no doubt that this was the essence of what it is to pastor. Peter mused, “My soul was shrinking. We always seemed to have too much to do and too little time to do it. While the church was an exciting place to be, there was no longer any joy in ministry leadership. After work, I had little energy left over to parent our daughters or to enjoy being with Geri.”¹⁷ And then it hit rock bottom when Geri told her husband that she was going to quit church. Her loneliness while being married coupled with raising the girls alone was too much. She said, “Pete, my life would be easier if we were separated.”¹⁸ Peter and Geri did not learn “how to say no to all the urgencies that congregations foist on the pastor, his wife and his children.”¹⁹

With a young marriage and no idea of what it is to be a pastor’s wife. Hylton mothered two of three children while Ray, her husband, faithfully served the church for nine years. It was clear that she had her struggles:

People were comparing me to the former pastor’s wife. Was this their unspoken expectation that I would fit a similar role? I was very upset, bewildered and

¹⁶Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife*, 190.

¹⁷Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 14.

¹⁸Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 14.

¹⁹Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife*, 159.

pressured because I knew they hired my husband to serve the church; I was not hired to serve the congregation's preconceived expectations. Yet despite the many spoken and unspoken expectations, those early years were some of the happiest days of my life and some of the most challenging years.²⁰

Hylton describes a journey that is guided by God and supported wholeheartedly by her husband. The gist of the story is that being a pastor's wife is definitely a calling and despite the obstacles it is a rewarding journey. Hylton's honesty and realness are good examples, and her issues are familiar and relatable thus allowing her audience to do retrospection. She concluded by saying, "Ministry in congregations can be hard on the minister's family. This is not a gripe session. I am not a burnt-out, beat-up pastor's wife who wants to run as far as possible from the church."²¹ She continued by quoting Bill Hybels who says, "The local church is the hope of the world," and I believe that with all my heart."²²

Books, Part 2: Scriptural Interpretations

The Effective Pastor (Robert C. Anderson)

Once again we see the approach in helping to make the job of a pastor more adaptable, and Robert Anderson shares some advice and general rules on how to deal with the obstacles along this ministry journey. It is clear that the author believes there are specific roles designed for the wife of a pastor, but I believe he also thinks it is not every wife who is suited for the position, to the point where he states that a pastor who finds himself with a wife without what he interprets as scriptural qualifications he should step down until such is reached by her.

²⁰Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, 165.

²¹Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, 165.

²²Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, 165.

I believe that the picture the Scripture paints of a pastor's wife is of a mature, godly, Christian woman who performs a distinctive ministry in the church and who does her best to act as a model Christian wife and mother. They should be women of godliness, maturity, and wisdom that others in a congregation will want to emulate. Is it then not reasonable and scriptural to conclude that if a man has a wife who does not meet that qualification, he should remain out of the pastoral ministry until she does?²³

After starting out with a rhetorical question Anderson concretized his belief and interpretation which matches his mindset of the wife's role. In my estimation, his interpretation does not allow freedom of mind to the wife and a total giving of one partner to the other. He concludes that "such an assumption is valid and scriptural."²⁴ It is also reasonable that pastors' wives be allowed to utilize the many options and opportunities available to them today instead of being forced to fulfill a set of prescribed duties and satisfy some unreasonable expectations.

The wives of our pastors today are identifying their areas of giftedness and are using this knowledge to serve where their passion is. The wife's involvement must include the suggested practical concerns addressed by the author, which are

- A model for others
- A wife and helper to her husband
- Keeping herself attractive to her husband
- Raising Godly children
- Keeps in touch with family
- Maintain her relationship to God.²⁵

²³Robert C. Anderson, *The Effective Pastor* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 71 (this list is a direct quotation from Anderson).

²⁴Anderson, *The Effective Pastor*, 71.

²⁵Anderson, *The Effective Pastor*, 73, 74, 76, 82.

While all of these are of great importance, it should be on the basis of a wife's choice in focusing on her spiritual giftedness, her desire, and her passion for ministry. In other words, some of the traditional roles should not be made out to be enforced rules. In which case, the pastor's wife should not be seen as culpable because of her decision to follow after her passion which is outside of the norm. It is of great importance that the uniqueness of the individual be accepted and appreciated as God's gift to her. The scriptural stance taken by the author also suggests that the pastor's wife is a Christian. The Christian is not called to a life of performance or to act but being that individual God called one to be. It is a realness that allows the wife to live out her faith to God's glory which in essence supports her partner and blesses the congregation.

Most arguments suggest that there are roles for the pastor's wife and along with that are expectations. However, from speaking to many of the pastors' wives in Jamaica, there is the common view that no one really cares about the struggles faced in ministry, their church, or even their husbands. It is interesting that a female writer is just as strong and quite aligned in her thinking like that of the male pastor, Robert Anderson, on the prerequisite of the pastor's wife.

Testimonies (Ellen G. White)

In Ellen G. White's *Testimonies for the Seventh Day Adventist Church* she talked about Satan's ability to lead God-called ministers astray through their unconsecrated partners. This confirms the statement of the lack of understanding of the many challenges faced by the companions of the pastors.

According to White, “In former years the wives of ministers endured want and persecution.”²⁶ There are many pastors’ wives today who are still sacrificing family and their own aspirations in order to serve their husbands so that they are unrestricted to do the work of the Lord. One Jamaican wife shared recently that she resigned her job from a reputable private sector organization to supervise her two sons through school and exams to allow her husband time for the ministry. There are wives who are having experiences that are far less than pleasing. White also says the following about wives:

She should not indulge in homesick feelings, or by lack of cheerfulness and by spoken complaints harass her husband and make his task harder, and perhaps by her discontent draw him from the place where he could do good. She should not divert the interest of her husband from laboring for the salvation of souls, to sympathize with her ailments and gratify her whimsical discontented feelings. If she would forget herself and labor to help others, talk and pray with poor souls, and act as if their salvation was of higher importance than other consideration, she would have no time to be homesick.²⁷

Speaking historically of outstanding women, Vinson Synan points to missionary wives who “not only accompanied their husbands to play the expected role of a supportive minister’s wife, but they were also actively involved in every aspect of the ministry, including preaching, teaching, and praying for the sick and for converts.”²⁸

Is it being homesick, or this could be a behavior that has surfaced on account of the restrictions on the ministry of women? In the Church of God in Christ, the founder Charles Harrison Mason “restricted [women’s] influence by preserving the office of pastor and title of preacher for men. Women expounding on Scripture were said to be teaching—not preaching—and they were allowed to speak only from a secondary lectern,

²⁶Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1 (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 451.

²⁷Vinson Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011), 451.

²⁸Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*. 388.

not from the pulpit.”²⁹ In the Assemblies of God the General Council dropped all distinctions of ordination, thus opening all ranks of ministry to women. According to Synan, “even this concession did not, however, materially improve the ministry of most women in the denomination or reduce the predominance of male leadership at congregational and administrative levels.”³⁰ Whether by personal encounter or involvement in church programs wives would have learned that ministry is not only about loving their husbands.

From White’s perspective the pastor’s wife is joined to a man who is called by God; this she says is a solemn work. White testifies of hearing messages from God and penned them for our learning. Wives can learn from her argument that encourages a lifestyle that glorifies Christ. Most wives, however, would probably see the disturbing picture she paints of men who are always in good standing and a warning to the “unsanctified wife who is the greatest curse that a minister can have.”³¹ The book communicates worthwhile ideas that can influence both wife and husband but also manages to expose a job description for the pastor’s wife that is the hardest to fill and one that must be coveted. It gives an idealistic and legalistic outline of the role of wives in a tone that speaks of wives who are hindrances to their conscientious husbands. Yet no attempt was made to give any practical advice to the pastor’s wife as how to conduct her life in order to fulfill her role of being a helpmeet.

²⁹Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 389.

³⁰Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 389-90.

³¹White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 139.

The Last Great Conflict (A. J. Tomlinson)

As an overseer, editor, and pastor, A. J. Tomlinson's life exemplifies that of a Christian who lived through victory and defeat and yet was dedicated to the call of God on his life. *The Last Great Conflict* speaks of his personal conviction and inherent love for God and his people. He viewed himself as a servant and therefore viewed the commands given in the Scriptures and teachings of the church as his guideline for ministry and family life. He obeyed the call and served the people in the Bahamas, being away from his wife for a while.

The book in speaking about spiritual warfare describes sister Tomlinson's experience. Tomlinson wrote, "For about ten hours we wrestled and fought against demon powers which caused the awful suffering and most excruciating pain. She endured the agony, obeyed the word, stood test, until our Refiner, who was standing by, saw it was enough and bade the arch-enemy release his grasp and depart. Then with a feeble voice, whispered her desire to have all the church and her friends to come to her bedside as she had 'a message and a blessing for everyone.'"³² Here is a wife who experienced serious challenges but was able to yield to the call of God; the book highlights the importance of a personal relationship with Christ that brings endurance.

Her husband and partner in ministry A. J. Tomlinson recorded his wife's affliction for the benefits of wives who might be experiencing the same fate. The mixed experiences of the wives will however generate different responses to the theme of this book, which speaks to the author's formation and belief of early Pentecostals. Speaking about A. J. Tomlinson's formation, Synan said, "Within the Church of God (Cleveland,

³²A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, vol. 1 of The Church of God Movement Heritage series (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing, 2011), 17.

Tennessee), women have played an important but decreasing role in the denomination since its beginning . . . since from 1907 to 1926 successive general assemblies continued to reduce the rights and privileges of women clergy.”³³ According to Synan:

From the movement’s inception, Pentecostal women, as well as men, tended to hold the conservative understanding of the role of women within the family and society that only deepened when the movement sought to align itself more closely with the broader Evangelical community. Like other segments of that community and many segments of the broader society, early Pentecostals believed that the proper place for women was in the home. Married women were expected to uphold the role of submission to their husbands and were generally expected to be supportive of their husband’s work and/or ministry.³⁴

Synan follows on the line of a historical argument that speaks well for the behaviors and thinking in today’s church. This model has been the practice of the author and has set the standard for the expected behavior of pastors’ wives. The author’s forty years of leadership still have significant impact on the church today. The impact though very positive still has some negative nuance on the lives of some Pentecostal Christians, as seen in the COGOP, Jamaica. As mentioned earlier, the Ministry Policy Manual of the COGOP speaks of the approval for women to be appointed by the church to minister. This approval was given structural support by the introduction of the Women’s Missionary Band in 1928. This standard would have been that which forms the characteristics of sister Tomlinson and would have been the ideal for pastors’ wives for many years. As cited by this research, there are effects based on the behavioral patterns of these women. However, as we center our thoughts on causes it is noted that the supportive role of the pastor’s wife in her husband’s ministry has shifted somewhat from the spiritualized and idealized role to that of empowerment of service and social

³³Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 390.

³⁴Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 382.

organization with great emphasis on the importance of recognition of self, and individual contribution to kingdom advancement.

The church in Jamaica with all its diverse traditions has always obeyed the church's polity as reinforced by General Headquarters in Cleveland (U.S.A.). The challenges are inescapable as "practical adjustments and organizational changes had always taken place, but in the second generation, we were content to add new auxiliaries and departments without removing or fundamentally altering any of the old."³⁵ To the author of this thesis, things and times have changed, situations have also changed, and this means that responses and behaviors of wives will vary. The wives can learn from the strength and emotional support that comes from a wife to a husband regardless of the circumstances, and this is true in the case of Bishop Tomlinson and sister Tomlinson.

From Obscurity to Prominence (Enoch S. Cornwall)

Enoch Cornwall's writing might not be scholarly, but his experiences in ministry teach his readers the difference between the called and the appointed. It is a life experience that brings with it spiritual maturity and inspiration which has contributed greatly to the overall ministry in Jamaica. He emphasized the importance of choosing to grow in Christ while making the necessary changes along the ministry journey rather than trying to fit into a role defined by a congregation or by extension a denomination. Cornwall's life story, which paints a picture of the multifaceted nature of the Jamaican culture within the home, is in stark comparison with the practical guides written as tools

³⁵ Adrian L. Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future*, Foundations (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 93.

for persons in ministry by some of the authors cited in this chapter. Its difference speaks to the lessons that can be learned from experiencing the grace and mercy of God.

Grace gave him the fortitude to withstand the storms of life when the pastor becomes the homemaker, a nurse to his wife, growing well-behaved children, and having a perfectly arranged home. The main premise of the book is to show that roles can change depending on the circumstances and that all pastors' wives are different so filling someone else's shoes can be an extremely uncomfortable fit. This book serves as a Bible study series for pastors' wives on trust and faith, the importance of their own relationship with Christ, the importance of a strong husband/wife relationship, and a strong relationship with children. Bishop Cornwall said:

We had a good family life. My wife was very attentive and took care of the house and family. But I was soon to know and experience what God meant when He said in Isaiah chapter 48 verse 10, "I have refined thee, though not as silver, I have refined thee in the furnace of affliction". Like any human being would ponder, "I wonder why I was chosen by God to minister to my wife in this manner.³⁶

Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century (Vinson Synan)

The author's intention is to engage a cross section of leaders in a well-needed discussion that will benefit the Pentecostal movement in the twenty-first century and beyond. It augurs well for Jamaican women in ministry today, as the pages speak to the same topic of challenges within ministry. The pastors' wives of this century should benefit from the historic root of the movement of which they are a part. The book shares the rich experiences of current spiritual leaders and can be used as a reference tool. Synan in support of this says:

³⁶Enoch Sanford Cornwall and Kadiana Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence: The Inspiring Journey into the Life and Ministry of Bishop Enoch Cornwall* (Kingston, Jamaica: Lithomedia Printers, 2012), 82, 85.

To understand the future, we must know the present situation. At the same time there is pressure for more openness toward women in leadership on all fronts. Pentecostal congregation will be forced to either tap into this unused pool of capable women or risk losing them to other Evangelical, as well as mainline denominations, that are more open to their leadership. Women are rediscovering an aspect of Spirit empowerment that they have long neglected which is the freedom to operate in ministry as the Spirit, rather than any hierarchical system, wills.³⁷

Synan emphasized the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit as well as the key to choose to grow instead of trying to fit into a role that is defined by a congregation or even a denomination. Ministry is indeed a journey, and so is the life of a pastor's wife.

The book challenges women in ministry, inclusive of pastors' wives, to fulfill their purpose by utilizing their God-given-privilege. This privilege is a functioning mind which results in faithful service to God based on one's commitment to her calling. The style of writing is straightforward; the contents are very experience oriented and supported by statistics that clearly support my thesis topic about the struggles wives face with little recognition of their real worth and contributions overall.

The inveterate problem of our wives to be sorry for themselves in these situations is only an escape route from our God-given responsibility. The book made reference to women who were early pioneers. One such person was "Aimee Semple McPherson [who] established the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1924."³⁸ Though they were never recognized for their great contribution, standing as a reminder is the headquarters of the said denomination here in Jamaica which reinforces the fact that non-recognition is not the recipe for quitting or dormancy. The practicality of this book will

³⁷Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 397, 399.

³⁸Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 393.

serve as an encouragement to the many wives who have faced and are still facing similar challenges.

Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies (Stephen D. Glazier)

A collection of papers on the growth of Pentecostalism in the Caribbean, of which Jamaica is a part, speaks to “the complexities that develop out of one’s experiences that relate to culture.”³⁹ The church is alive, and therefore we see from these case studies findings that our wives can identify with them as a means of going forward despite their challenges. This does not prevent the many problems which are still likely based on questions that are yet to be answered.

These case studies that are based on an investigative approach solidify the fact that the church is within a world of turmoil, strife, and divisions which speaks to the countless implications for our religious practices. The women are encouraged by these findings that their behaviors are not strange but can be helped with leadership development and that their theology does affect their behavior.

As the comparisons are being made it brings stark reminders to our wives that the Jamaican culture is one of revivalism, cults, and slavery. The habit of dictating to others what to do, according to this collection, stems from the culture of the very authoritarian and hierarchical nature of Jamaican revivalism; which has a close affinity to Pentecostalism, of which the COGOP is a part. We learn here that our behaviors are learned from church culture and by extension the community.

³⁹Stephen D. Glazier, ed., *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), preface, viiis.

In clarifying the issue which I am studying, I choose to anchor it in the charismata. One may sense that he or she has received “a spiritual endowment or a divinely granted ability or capability which does not exactly fit into the normal church structure, interpreted as a Call to do something in the advancement of God’s kingdom. These women were spoken about by Synan as he made reference to the COGOP (then called Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee), he said, “They . . . moved with deliberation to create environments where they could be free to pursue their God-given call to ministry and leadership wholeheartedly.”⁴⁰

Whenever someone receives the charismata, that individual is also “given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4:7) allowing for the charismata of ministry expressions (Eph 4:11-12). Every child has been called by God to a ministry of some kind. Despite the many perceptions, the wives of pastors have come to the understanding that God can also call them to specific ministries. It is now accepted, I believe, that couples are also called into ministry; however, each partner’s needs, fears, and aspirations are included in the ministry call.

Conclusion

It is important to accept that changes have occurred over the years based on some of the shared literary works. However, note should also be taken that as things change so they remain the same. The different congregations and the society have changed the directions for these women to reach their goals. However, it is reasonable to believe that being created in God’s image and being given the mind of Christ as individuals make us answerable for the knowledge revealed unto us. I believe that the wives of our pastors

⁴⁰Synan, *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*, 391.

and by extension female ministers have the desire to fulfill the calling which they believe God has placed on their lives.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

History in fact speaks to as well as points us to the way forward and instructs us on the scriptural standpoint of the role of the pastor's wife. Her supportive role to her husband and by extension her overall contribution to family, church, and community is dependent on her relationship with Christ. Her spiritual maturity will guide her conduct as it relates to her relationship with her husband, as well as her relationship with other women. This is indicated in Paul's discourse in 1 Tim 3 as he addressed the wives of the men who were called into leadership.

It is important to remain focused, and my husband and I experienced a great deal of anxiety in our earlier years of ministry in the Youth Department until we started applying the Word of God in a practical way. Things became much clearer as a result of our recognition and acceptance of the fact that the call of God was on our lives. It is the intention of the researcher that the instruments used in this research to assist in identifying social issues in the relationships between husbands and wives will be piloted by a biblical view. The ministry of the COGOP is marked by our belief in the Bible, Old and New Testaments. The Bible is therefore accepted as our Christian rule of faith and practice.

There have been many debates about the roles of women in ministry and the similarities of behaviors since the 1950s. The effect on self-perception and social relationship has been far-reaching, and yet from the local congregational level the expectation of practices and roles are not in response to biblical interpretations. The

researcher will seek to examine what the Scriptures teach about the purpose of the pastor's wife. Consideration will be given to the biblical parameters for establishing her role as a woman, believer, wife, and mother. According to Ogbu Kalu:

Feminine spirituality is radicated in the Bible with images of God as a mother in Israel, the awesome power of God mediated in predominantly feminine imagery. God's salvation was first broached and activated by Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, and Mary Magdalene. In each case, the heart of spirituality is yieldedness. These women had the courage to say yes to the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit and were able to see the invisible, had recourse to the sacred, and became coworkers with God. Their apparent weakness turned into a powerful, prophetic recovery of both church and community.¹

The Role of the Pastor's Wife in the Body of Christ

The key element to the continued discussion on the role of the pastor's wife in support of her husband's ministry is a right attitude toward the task that God has given her in partnership with her husband which is developed through working in partnership with Christ. Taking a historical perspective of the Church of God of Prophecy reveals that this body did not have a delusion as it relates to organizational structure. Its resolve developed from examination of the Scriptures, the New Testament in particular. Its dictates are governed by the New Testament theocracy, which demonstrates the very character of Christ. This confirms that the general assembly's mode of operation and by extension the Jamaican church as regards decisions and procedures must be in line with the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible evidences in both the Old Testament and the New Testament many instances of the woman's role in the body of Christ. The Holiness Movement, which is the embryo from which the Church of God of Prophecy sprang, provides biblical themes

¹Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 164.

reinforcing the merits of women to the ministry. Paul in Gal 3:28 promulgates the theme of biblical equality, while not suggesting sameness as it relates to sex. He strongly encourages unity within diversity. The equality and unity purported by Paul speak to the spiritual freedom received through Christ which gives the privilege to women as well as men to preach the gospel. The redemption plan also gives a supporting argument for biblical equality whereby the curse associated with women on the basis of the Fall was broken by the work of Christ. Pastors' wives who are first women are not characterized by roles but by that spiritual nature received at conversion. This same equality is not only for favored individuals but also was now extended to us all, both men and women. According to Paul, "the same equality is true for social and gender distinctions. No one people group or gender is to be exalted above others."²

Created in God's Image

In Gen 1 the creation of humanity is the main emphasis. The usage of related words in a number of the references brings credence to the specificity of God's direct purpose for creating mankind. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Here we see a picture that speaks to relationships. "Traditionally, the image has been seen as the capacities that set man apart from the other animals, ways in which human resembles God . . . a capacity for relationships governed by love and commitment."³

²A. Boyd Luter, "Galatians," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. E Ray Clendenen et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2015), 1272.

³*ESV Study Bible*, ed. Lane T. Dennis et al. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 51. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

God had a plan for man, and so Isa 45:9 speaks of vessels that belong to God, reminding us that God made us for his purpose. God is the potter, and we the children of God, whether male or female, are the clay. Any form of manipulation must come from God, not a congregation or a denomination. Creating is from the root word *bārā*, which is to create and has God as the subject. The word technically means to create out of nothing. Its difference speaks to the theological significance where unlike ‘forming’ which may be used for divine as well as in the secular sense, creating based on the root word *bārā* emphasizes God as the sole Sovereign Creator who creates from non-existence (Genesis 1:1, 27; 5:2; 6:7). The word create is often found in parallel with ‘to form’ and ‘to make’ (Isaiah 45:18). This speaks to the personalized nature of the product, with personalized duties which will give expected results according to the divine plan of God. In the creation narrative everything other than human came into being with God’s declaration ‘Let there be’.“God’s purpose for creation is first fulfilled in Israel. As Dr. Carol Kaminski said in “Genesis in Depth,” the three verbs, “be fruitful,” “multiply,” and “fill the earth” are used to describe Israel.”⁴ God’s plan was not intended for Israel alone but the entire universe inclusive of us, female and male.

This is the picture as others look on us pastors’ wives, as we face our many challenges in the home, church, and community. Shapeless and unattractive, but the One who forms us is able to bring His purpose to fulfillment. Form means God thought about his creative action in a personal way. The outcome of the hands of this Master Potter was man, who came from nothing into the very image of the Master Potter. The primary message is the shaping and forming of the object for a specific purpose. Psalm 139:14

⁴Carol Kaminski, *Genesis in Depth* (Hamilton, Massachusetts: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2008), LO-2-10.

speaks of “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” A result of the study of the word *fearfully* points to a place of awe and reverence for God. Man was fashioned for the purpose of worshipping God. To form is to have a deep commitment to be a devoted follower of our Creator. A woman also has that creative purpose, and so the effort of researching the thesis topic is also an effort to get wives to understand their role in glorifying their Creator, which is foremost in order to be that indispensable companion she is expected to be. As the body of Christ and specifically women, let us accept the declaration according to Isa 43:21 and celebrate the one who formed us for himself.

In the Jamaican congregations there are people with different upbringings and varied experiences; there are persons with sad stories from their childhood, as well as hurt from adult relationships. As people retell their experiences and occurrences in life, there remains hope, in spite of the varied challenges, as bearing God’s image brings with it the dynamic outworking both of resembling and representing him. Who we are is really what we bring to our spiritual experience. This experience will be significantly affected by our religious faith and cultural diversities, and being Jamaican and Pentecostal is a major factor. Christopher J. H. Wright says:

Whatever previous religious faith and experience may be there in the journey that any person makes to faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, it is essential that that person’s worldview, life, experience, personal story, is from then on re-centered on the truly biblical Jesus, so that it is the biblical Jesus that now takes root within his or her mind and culture, transforming and converting both to Christ- not merely molding Christ into the unreconstructed shape of the surrounding culture.⁵

In the Jamaican sphere some biblical interpretation caused more problems for the women than good. The 54th Assembly (1959, pp. 148-49) states:

⁵Christopher J.H. Wright, *Salvation Belongs to Our God: Celebrating the Bible’s Central Story*, Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 115.

Your dress should be with moderation, neat and clean, but not for show. Moderation includes paying moderate prices for clothing, wearing dresses of high-enough necklines, low-enough hem-line, sleeves of reasonable length. The wearing of extremely sheer fabrics is unbecoming to a saint and the wearing of shorts in public should never be practiced. You should never wear gold for ornament or decoration. Finger rings, bracelets, earrings, necklaces, lockets and large showy pins—these are also unbecoming to a saint of God. Rouge, lipstick, nail polish and extremely costly perfumes are used to satisfy the pride of life and therefore they should have no place in the lives of those who love God.⁶

The Jamaican church used this as the criteria for church membership, and therefore it was read in every new converts' class. If proof could be had that any member disobeyed, they would be back benched until the pastor or band leader gave them release. In giving these instructions, members were asked to receive them with a meek spirit; however, the gentle spirit in which they should be given was never deemed gentle. The Scriptures used as the biblical guidelines here were 1 Peter 3:3-4 and 1 Tim 2:9-10, where the apostles did not prohibit the braiding of hair or the wearing of jewelry but were warning against vanity and excess as they relate to the Christian's personal appearance, which in fact is a testimony and witness of the God whose image we reflect. Likewise, based on the then interpretation 1 John 2:15-17, members of local congregations were prevented from watching television, going to public beaches, or even socializing with the opposite sex. The teaching by the bishops and pastors was for members to avoid these things completely. The Scripture clearly did not speak to religion or irreligion in dressing but warned against pride and the need for modesty, which addresses that which does not cause lust and the need for the preservation of moderation in whatever we do.

⁶*These Necessary Things: The Doctrine and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy as set forth by the General Assembly*, 10th ed. (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1983), 47.

Being born a second time dictates our behavior and our appearance. The new birth brings us into a representation and resemblance of the One under whose lordship we function.

The Jamaican Paradigm

It has always been a concern that women were not to be ordained as ministers, yet they can hold prayer meetings and become church leaders where there are no available male ministers. Several of the churches in St. Catherine East started on the verandas and homes of women, yet sisters who have labored in much prayer while on the mission field were neglected.

In an interview with Bishop Adrian Varlack Sr., he confirmed that “the practice was for women to carry a restricted license as female Evangelists. They however performed spiritual functions such as preaching, teaching, and informal counseling but were not allowed to baptize, administer the Lord’s Supper, add people to the church or conduct business conferences.”⁷ According to research testimonies, “a female pastoring a membership of 300 hundred members could not do baptism, however a male pastoring 75 members would be the baptizer at the church of 300 members being pastored by the female.”⁸ These have been some of the real underlying problems coupled with the lack of answers that no doubt resulted in lack of confidence and an inferiority complex in our females. If a female has the ability to pastor successfully and administratively, why not baptize?

It was a custom at the local church that I attended in my earlier years, in the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, for almost all the prayer meetings to be conducted

⁷Interview with Adrian Varlack Sr., Church of God of Prophecy Church historian; March 2, 2017.

⁸Testimonies shared in an interview with Bishop Enoch Cornwall, former parish overseer, August, 2017.

by a female who in those days were called “mother.” When everything failed it was the women who could pray through the problems with anyone from church to the community and even in the family homes of some members. The Cocoa Walk church in St. Catherine East started in a sister’s living room. Sister Facey “who worshipped at the Facey Church of God of Prophecy would take some of the brethren with her and have prayer meeting and bible study. She continued and five persons got saved.”⁹ As it relates to the biases within the Jamaican context historically, the matter of starting a mission was under the purview of a licensed evangelist. A mission was organized by Canute Francis, who was an evangelist at the time. “Sister Facey continued that work under the supervision of the then Evangelist Francis, now Bishop Francis, until she was appointed as the Pastor.”¹⁰

There is no doubt that the COGOP accepts the “Bible as our guide in all matters of faith; therefore we look to the Bible as our highest authority for doctrine, practice, organization, and discipline.”¹¹ This truth was substantiated in our Assembly Minutes of July 1996:

According to the New Testament, there is no distinction between men and women concerning salvation, grace, and the gifts of the Spirit and there is none concerning prayer, witnessing, preaching, exhorting, and fulfilling the Great Commission (Galatians 3:28; Acts 2:17, 18:21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5; 14:3; Romans 16:1-5; Philippians 4:3). Women cannot be excluded from fulfilling the individual responsibilities of every Christian and their own gifts and callings.¹²

The women of the COGOP are quite appreciative of the Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity, of which Dr. Hector Ortiz, bishop in the COGOP and my supervisor

⁹Enoch Sanford Cornwall and Kadiana Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence: The Inspiring Journey into the Life and Ministry of Bishop Enoch Cornwall* (Kingston, Jamaica: Lithomedia Printers, 2012), 97-98.

¹⁰Cornwall and Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence*, 98.

¹¹Adrian L. Varlack, *Church of God of Prophecy: Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future, Foundations* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 118.

¹²Minutes of the 89th General Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy, July 8-14, 1996; Billy Murray, General Overseer, 39.

for this course of study, was a part. The committee recommended “that women be acknowledged in the preaching ministries of the church. Those who feel a calling on their lives will be set forth by a local church and, after meeting certain requirements within a specified time frame, will be examined by the state/national and International Offices, and be issued a minister’s license.”¹³ As we move into the corrective measures, there is a rationale that speaks to ministry applications and the women’s role in the church. It is evidenced in the Scriptures and confirmed in the recommendation of the committee “that our female members should be free to exercise their giftedness in speaking, teaching, preaching, or fulfilling pastoral duties.”¹⁴

Interestingly, the Jamaican church, and I speak specifically of the women in ministry in the Jamaican church, has had to deal with the challenges that arise from the incorrect application of the Scriptures contextually. The approach to biblical interpretation was not on the basis of an exegetical study of the Word. Without reservation we can say that the contents of our teaching and preaching must be based on Scripture. However, we were not focused on the essentials of holistic teaching which engage heart, mind, and body. We fail to be culturally responsive because wrong interpretation of the Scriptures is misleading. For the women in the church to move forward in acceptance of their role in the transformation process we must be intentional in the steps that allow the ministry experience.

One of the female pastors within the parish shared from her experience the challenges she faced on the incorrect interpretation of 1 Cor 14:34-35: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be

¹³Minutes of the 89th General Assembly, 40.

¹⁴Minutes of the 89th General Assembly, 39.

submissive, as the law also says”; “And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”¹⁵ “Between A.D. 55 and A.D. 64, the scriptures quoted above are what Paul wrote to the churches in Corinth and Ephesus respectively, which have now become the divisive points among those who have failed to apply the Word of God, contextually.”¹⁶ She continued by asking a question before mentioning the problem:

Are you aware that quite a number of the most effective, powerful, and influential men of God today, became converted, filled with the Holy Spirit and/or were identified and released into their specific God-ordained purpose, through/by the ministry of an anointed and obedient woman of God?¹⁷

The pastor then proceeded to mention the problem which she considers unfortunate:

Some of these very men are among those who are now zealously opposing the practice of women in ministry. Interestingly, they base their convictions and arguments on the theological belief that women do not have a place in pulpit ministry, making reference to the Apostle Paul’s commentary about women in the church- from women keeping their head covered to women remaining silent.¹⁸

As the church moves forward in acceptance of our role in the transformation process, we must choose to be intentional in the steps that allow the discipleship experience. This can and will happen only with dedication and commitment; and I will add, with openness, and not only acceptance of roles but also the realization that there are real challenges that accompany these roles. Discipleship then becomes integral for the building up of a coping mechanism that will build the capacity of the pastors’ wives to

¹⁵1 Corinthians 14:34-35, New King James Version.

¹⁶Valrie V. Cole, *Female Pastors and Pastors’ Wives: Embracing Your Roles Amidst the Challenges* (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 51.

¹⁷Cole, *Female Pastors and Pastors’ Wives*, 50.

¹⁸Cole, *Female Pastors and Pastors’ Wives*, 50-51.

deal with unrealistic and conflicting demands and expectations. Pastors' wives are great helpers in the ministry of their husbands; however, quite often it is forgotten or ignored that the roles of pastors' wives can be divided into domestic roles (that is, roles at home), spiritual roles (roles at church), social roles (which speaks to their roles in the community), and for some, professional roles (that is, their roles at work). The pastor's wife is therefore much more than a woman who is married to a pastor.

African Retention

Stephen Glazier alluded to the Jamaican culture being “built upon a West African world view.”¹⁹ From researching the writings of Pentecostal scholar Clifton R. Clarke, on *Pentecostal Theology in Africa* the Jamaican hermeneutics is brought to the fore, as there is a similar approach as it relates to oral tradition. Just like the Jamaican trend, the Word of God is delivered by an anointed servant called an evangelist. Along with speaking in other tongues there is also singing, dancing, and shouting unto the Lord with a loud voice both in private and public worship. But most important is the emphasis which is placed on the work of the Holy Ghost in the life of the believer. It is important for believers to be empowered for evangelism, enhancing church growth, and living a victorious personal Christian life. Likewise, the “African Pentecostal worship forms the context of a Spirit-led and empowered hermeneutical event.”²⁰ At this event “the living Word is preached, the Spirit also effects the practical outcome of the Word, which is transformation and

¹⁹Stephen D. Glazier, ed., *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbean and Latin America* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 36.

²⁰Clifton Clarke, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, vol. 6 of African Christian Studies series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 48.

empowerment to carry out the mandates of Scripture and to live a godly life.”²¹ These experiences on both fronts necessitate an outcome that speaks to positive and victorious living. This spiritual orientation sees results of transformation; however, it does not negate the varied challenges that exist.

Maria Frahm-Arp from an African Pentecostalism perspective examined the theology of women in the Pentecostal Evangelical Charismatic Christianity (PEC). This theology “shaped the views on women within Christianity, and how women think about themselves and their faith.”²² The guiding principles of this theology are securely anchored in the written Word. This is of great importance, as the Word of God along with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a believer is the transforming force. Therefore, regardless of cultural differences the body of Christ can learn from each other, as Pentecostalism has brought us into a global sphere.

Driven by the biblical text, wives in the PEC churches parallel their Jamaican sisters as in their conversation “the place of women in the society and the church is demarcated such that they are understood as the helpmates of men, the carers and keepers of the home.”²³ The word *understood* is the operative word, as while the wives in the PEC churches submit to their husbands they are “encouraged to realize their own personal autonomy and economic independence as they embrace an individual relationship with Jesus Christ as their Savior.”²⁴ The freedom given to these wives is no doubt pushed to the extreme considering a culture steeped in attention to clan and family and very little of self. The wives are further challenged to focus on themselves as Frahm-

²¹Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 48.

²²Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 150.

²³Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 151.

²⁴Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 151.

Arp's views on gender sparks male domination. Frahm-Arp purports "the flawed earthly men who mistreat women . . . make the male nature of God problematic for women."²⁵

The disclaimer followed immediately: "It is not the language of the Bible that needs to change, but the behavior of men so that they become loving fathers and husbands who reflect the love of God to women."²⁶

A Jamaican pastor's wife of approximately seventeen years encouraged the new pastors' wives to "make pleasing the Lord the first and most important thing in your life, and then your husband. One of the realities of being a pastor's wife is the reality of being comfortable in your own skin, with your own gifts and calling."²⁷ The domination of men in the Jamaican context was like Greek marriages in some sense where "infidelity for men carried no stigma whatsoever."²⁸ Should there be unfaithfulness in the marriage, while the men are silent and until further investigation, men are allowed to carry on in ministry, while the wife is back-benched and is made to feel like she is the cause. This is quite devastating, as the scriptural stance based on the twenty-ninth teaching of the COGOP is "one man with one woman uniting in one marriage becoming one flesh and remaining that way as long as they both live, regardless, of the action of any courts of the land."²⁹ The polity further states, "The Church of God has come to accept along with the statements of Mark, (Mark 10:2-12), Luke (Luke 16:18) and Paul, (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11) that "when people marry they are married for life."³⁰ These teachings have been changed based on further biblical studies, and the amended teachings

²⁵Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 151.

²⁶Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 151-52.

²⁷Judith S. Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife: Surviving in Ministry Yet Remaining in Love with God and His People*, Geneva Authors Shelf (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2012), loc. 602.

²⁸James Stone, *The Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1977), 255.

²⁹Stone, *Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity*, 257.

³⁰Stone, *Church of God of Prophecy History and Polity*, 256.

are contained in the COGOP International General Assembly Minutes and Policy manuals made available at the General Assembly convened bi-annually. The Jamaican reality is, there are still pastors who hold true to earlier teachings regardless, and this is an aspect which still remains a contributory factor to the struggles women face in ministry and by extension the unfair pressures experienced by wives in many congregations.

The entire situation has to be considered contextually, and the different conclusive arguments speak to this. As it relates to women being silent in the church, and the rejection by some male pastors of females being pastors, this has been the experience by many pastors' wives Jamaicans like myself. We all were subjected to this rejection, and in the earlier years, having to make contributions in business conferences only by writing a note and giving it to a brother. One St. Catherine East pastor's wife of approximately twenty-five years said "whatever conclusion we draw, as to what was the real issue among those women as they participated in public worship in the Corinthian church; one thing is clear, and that is, that Paul's admonition to them was not intended to be a universal teaching for all times and all cultures."³¹ Frahm-Arp encouraged women to understand their role and reminded them "that through Christ they are loosened from all the social, emotional, and spiritual chains of abuse, oppression, and destruction and should take care of themselves, pamper themselves, and value themselves."³² A profound statement from a Jamaican pastor's wife now residing in the United States says, "I remain convinced that when a man loves God with all his heart, he will treat his wife like a queen."³³

³¹Cole, *Female Pastors and Pastors' Wives*, 54-55.

³²Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, 161.

³³Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, loc. 528.

Wife as Helper

There is no explicit teaching on the role of the pastor's wife from the Scripture; however, the word *helper* in Gen 2:18 speaks of God's provision of a suitable companion for the husband. In brief, the word *helper* as used in the Old Testament normally focuses on the aid given to God's people by God himself at their times of difficulties. The word refers to that individual who provides personal help to those who are under attack from enemies and in times of military wars. God is seen here as the one through whom survival is possible and is therefore valuable. There are, however, different types of "tasks" the helper usually does. According to the Free Dictionary by Farlex, a helper is "a person who contributes to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or purpose."³⁴

Within the Jamaican context it is customary for the construction helper to lay blocks; the assistant farmer waters the vegetables when planted; the administrative bishop's helper, his secretary, types all correspondence; the wife together with her husband produces children and mothers them; and the household helper cleans and cooks. The phrase "contributes to the fulfillment of a need" and the word *purpose* stands out as I look at Eve's role in the context of the Garden of Eden.

Based on the picture painted by the word *image* in Genesis as it relates to the creation of human beings, man who was created by God is a valuable species. Valuable speaks to God's divine purpose for creating man. The fulfillment of this divine purpose was not possible without the provision of a helper. Eve being this helper had to be created as Adam's equal. The environment in the garden was perfect; however, it lacked

³⁴Farlex, *TheFreeDictionary*, WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection (2003–2008), accessed January 17, 2018, from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/helper>.

creativity and fellowship. Eve provided the opportunity for friendship. The relationship between two of the same kind afforded the development process.

There were specific tasks assigned to this team. According to Genesis, “God blessed them,” and the tasks followed: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule” (Gen 1:28). Paul, however, confirmed that this blessing was not achievable without the helper, and neither was the helper (Eve) able to do it by herself: “man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake” (1 Cor 11:9).

The term “helper” according to God’s description of the woman expresses her indispensable role in the achievement of the divine plan. God created everything and said it was good (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25). However, God said it was not good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18). The word *good* is parallel with the words *favorable* and *convenient*. God’s design for the garden was not favorable with man alone but for man (male and female) to develop their full potential. This was made possible through divine help, the provision of Eve with whom God’s gifts were shared. The word *helper* therefore suggests the woman’s supportive role in the divine plan of God. For that reason we can say a woman is joined to a man in marriage to provide help by coming alongside him, to be that companion who brings comfort. This calling is a representation of the divine plan, which means the success of this union is possible only through the recognition that the assistance needed is from a Divine, all-knowing infallible source.

A wife in giving support to her husband is instructed according to Timothy to be worthy of respect and should not be placed in a leadership position based on her husband’s vocation. It is, however, of great importance for pastors’ wives to accept the fact that they are prominent figures within the congregation and will be seen as mentors

and role models. Paul in 1 Tim 3:11, in addressing the deacons, places strong emphasis on character; the pastor's wife most importantly is first called to a relationship with Christ and this would speak to a specific character as a believer. I therefore believe the inference is to Christian women and therefore would also speak to a pastor's wife, who should be an example to women in the congregation.

Paul also places "emphasis on conduct. While he has a good deal to say about the way those who are called into the ministry should live, he is not silent either about the conduct of others in the church. Paul insists on the importance of prayer (2:8) and on the way believers should behave, including women (2:9-15)." ³⁵ The wife of the pastor can either be a blessing to her husband or a hindrance in his ministry. She can either affect his ministry positively or negatively. "Paul's message to Timothy provides a godly basis for a weighty responsibility carried by the wife because of her husband's position and responsibility." ³⁶ Lorna Dobson clearly accepts that there will be challenges as it relates to being a pastor's wife. As one who was married to her husband before he became a pastor, she had to be deliberate about learning how a minister's wife should behave. This is a recommendation that would benefit any wife: "A pastor's wife must give serious consideration to the position she is in—namely, as the 'wife of' a man who has set his desires on a 'noble task' (1 Timothy 3:1). The position carries with it the responsibility to manage his family in a way that will cause him to be worthy of respect." ³⁷ Dobson accentuated her earlier points by saying, "So whether we feel that we have chosen our lot in life or not, whether we want to call it a 'role' or whether we will forever be frustrated

³⁵D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 376.

³⁶Lorna Dobson, *I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife: Authentic Living in a Fishbowl World*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 23.

³⁷Dobson, *I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife*, 24.

by not being able to change the stereotypes people have held about us, our love for our husbands and commitment to help him fulfill his own dreams is cause enough to spur us to seek a heart of contentment and peace within our circumstances.”³⁸

A Virtuous Wife

The book of Proverbs celebrates a woman who is godly and devoted to the well-being of her family. As we look at Prov 31:10-31 we see the description of the wife’s responsibilities and her approach in doing them. This passage “portrays what both husband and wife should be like as individuals. The verses give us a picture of both man and woman created equally in God’s image, who have been called to rule over the earth on God’s behalf (Genesis 1:27-28).”³⁹

She is worth more than rubies (v. 10); she is good to her husband (v. 12). “She is not confined to the home but is engaged in business. This verse demonstrates remarkable financial independence for a woman in the ancient world: she herself considers a field (indicating wise judgment) and buys it (indicating control of a substantial amount of money) (verse 16).”⁴⁰ She takes care of the poor and the needy (v. 20); she weaves and sows and sells to the merchants (vv. 19, 22, 24).

“This wife’s beauty, character, and accomplishments deserve praise at the city gate, in the city meeting place. She deserves recognition as an individual in her own right, not just as the wife of her husband.”⁴¹ The crux of the matter is no woman, whether single or married, wants to live under the shadow of her partner. While her commitment

³⁸Dobson, *I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife*, 24.

³⁹Thomas Hale and Stephen Thorson, *The Applied Old Testament Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 965-66.

⁴⁰Dennis and Gruder, *ESV Study Bible*.

⁴¹Hale and Thorson, *Applied Old Testament Commentary*, 965.

to family is recognized, her capability and strength of character must be acknowledged. All that is done is fueled by her recognition of her creator and those he created. This no doubt gives her the impetus to do that which pleases God, and this is possible only because of her giftedness and relationship with her Creator.

It is a tall order regardless of culture or context, and can be a difficult decision to prioritize. One commentary said, “It is not expected that any one woman will look exactly like this in every respect.”⁴² The pastor’s wife must then keep her priorities in perspective, which is God first, her husband and children next, and then all others, that is, congregation and community. One wife shared that she learned from experience “that focusing on pleasing the Lord, not just myself, helped sustain me in my faith.”⁴³ Her God-given abilities which speak to the gifts she received as a steward from God is the authority to function as a member of the body of Christ. Again, the Scripture teaches that each member of the body of Christ is endowed with spiritual gifts that are sustained and activated by the Holy Spirit, and the pastor’s wife is one such believer. There are a variety of gifts, says Paul in his discourse with the Corinthians, as he tries to get the “church to understand how their unity can be enhanced by appreciating the variety of gifts God has given to them (1 Corinthians 12:4-7 ESV).”⁴⁴ As a church we struggle with accepting each other, sometimes forgetting that we all have our identity in Christ and that is what makes the difference.

⁴²Dennis and Gruder, *ESV Study Bible*, Notes - 31:10-31, 1190.

⁴³Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife*, loc. 204.

⁴⁴Dennis and Gruder, *ESV Study Bible*, Notes – 12:4-6, 2209.

Raising Godly Children

It is a complex job to raise one's children, and we have to admit that the children of the congregation of which we are a part have their own expectations. An early morning was not so welcoming; as a child waking up for early morning prayer seemed extremely unfair. It was out of love and obedience to a persistent mother that made the process bearable. The prayers were all about giving thanks to a mighty God, something my sister and I as children did not understand. After a while it became a way of life, and our dolls and the trees became our children, as we recited the Lord's Prayer to them.

It no doubt came from the book of wisdom: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)." ⁴⁵ This proverb according to one commentary is "founded on the covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen. 18:19), encourages parents to 'train' (i.e. to "dedicate" or "initiate" this is the sense of the word in Deut. 20:5; cf. Ezra 6:16) their children in the way (i.e. the right moral orientation)." ⁴⁶

One pastor wrote "The problem is that seldom are we able to stop long enough to analyze that particular child in his uniqueness in order to determine the way that he should go." ⁴⁷ We can all speak from experience as godly parents that teaching the children the Word does not prevent some from straying, but there are many testimonies that speak to the surety that they will not fully depart from it. The greatest assurance is total dependence on our heavenly Father to do the rest. Sometimes we practice the Pentecostal rule, that is, to make sure we take the children to church even if we have to drag them. Hylton said, "Dragging your children to church does not make them any more

⁴⁵ Proverbs 22:6, New King James Version.

⁴⁶ Dennis and Gruder, *ESV Study Bible*, Notes -22:6, 1172.

⁴⁷ Robert C. Anderson, *The Effective Pastor* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), 77.

saved than dragging a shopping cart into a department store make you a big spender.”⁴⁸ I concur with Dobson as she agrees with a mother of four young children who said, “Our family is our mission field, and we dare not miss the opportunity by being too busy for our own spiritual growth and our children’s spiritual education.”⁴⁹ Dobson continued sharing personally: “She helped me to see that no matter what our status in life, our responsibility to minister to our family is more important than looking for other ways to serve the Lord.”⁵⁰

Mentoring Spiritual Children

In Titus 2:4-5 Paul encourages the mentoring of the younger women in the church by the older women. “The intentional contrast *but you* must not be missed. While some people’s deeds disprove their claim to know God, Titus in contrast was to teach the people to live in a way *consistent with sound teaching*—in a way that would affirm rather than deny their claim to know God. The instruction addressed typical groups within the family structure (older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves – verse 2:1).”⁵¹ The teaching in these verses is practical and focuses on the domestic sphere. Paul emphasizes “that *older women* can help model for *young women* what it means to be a wife and mother.”⁵² This teaching further enforces the importance of the believer’s life being subjected to the test of biblical principles. According to the verses, the older women were to train the younger women in relationships with family and the

⁴⁸Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife*, 74.

⁴⁹Dobson, *I’m More Than the Pastor’s Wife*, 69.

⁵⁰Dobson, *I’m More Than the Pastor’s Wife*.

⁵¹Ray Van Neste, “Titus,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Jeremy Royal Howard (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 1332.

⁵²Clendenen and Howard, *Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary*, 1332.

management of the home (2:4-5). We can agree that there is a biblical imperative for the pastor's wife to be involved in the mentoring relationship with not only pastors' wives but other women in the body.

Conclusion

It is agreed that the role or responsibilities of the pastor's wife has a biblical foundation. Keeping the balance is a great struggle, but the wives of our pastors must accept that it begins and ends with their devotion to God. Adhering to any of these responsibilities for self-gain and outside of an intimate relationship with Christ is an impossible task. As I continue on this investigative journey, the experiences for me are like fresh wine for bolstering that already accepted call to support actively my husband as he leads God's people. However, one thing is clear in Proverbs, which I call a pastor's wife's job description, is the value of character and the importance of giving public honor to the wife of the pastor as an individual.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

Population

As this chapter presents the findings of the research methodology it is prudent to do a retrospective look at the surroundings of the pastors' wives. These surroundings are compelling and contributing factors to the behaviors and responses of these wives. The sampling that is done therefore represents wives from rural to deep rural areas of St. Catherine, Jamaica. These wives are serving in small and large churches. The churches are divided in six districts and are located miles apart from each other for many of them.

Based on the parish profile for St. Catherine as documented by the Jamaica Information Service, "St. Catherine was created in 1867 when four smaller parishes were joined together, and is named after Katherine (Catherine) Queen of Charles II."¹ Its capital is Spanish Town with a land area of 1,190.6 sq. km (459.7 sq. mls) and a population of 518,345.² Today, St. Catherine is the second most populous and the most rapidly growing parish, with large manufacturing and agriculture industries.

The capital town, Spanish Town, once the capital city of Jamaica, in the parish of St. Catherine has the finest collection of historical buildings and the country's archives. As a site of historical importance, its history was shaped by its experiences within two significant colonial periods. These periods are the Spanish, from 1534 to 1655, and the

¹Jamaica Information Service, 2018, accessed January 31, 2018,
<http://jis.gov.jm/information/parish-profiles/parish-profile-st-catherine/>.

²Jamaica Information Service, 2018, accessed January 31, 2018,
<http://jis.gov.jm/information/parish-profiles/parish-profile-st-catherine/>.

English, from 1655 to 1782. Within this historical town lie four of our churches with one of these being our newest established church.

In addition to St Catherine being the residence of these pastors' wives two very important icons in Jamaica are inherent of this parish: "The Most Honorable Portia Simpson-Miller, ON, M.P., Jamaica's first female Prime Minister; and Former Prime Minister the Most Honorable Orette Bruce Golding." St. Catherine also boasts COGOP national headquarters and the largest population of COGOP membership. The geographical outlay of the parish does not allow wives to live in proximity to each other; therefore, support mechanism is sparse and somewhat affects the quality of support to the pastor.

There are a total of 43 pastors in the parish, and of that amount 21 are females and of this 21 six serves in double roles as pastor and wife. During the early years ministry in the parish was made possible by walking for three miles or riding bicycles. Some of the now established churches were then only Sunday schools that were accommodated at the homes of some sisters like "Pearlina McLeod who is still alive today and worships at one of the churches in the parish."³ Sisters were sometimes transported on bicycles by brothers as this was the mode of transportation at that time. Several of the churches were organized on the basis of Sunday schools and later became missions. Street meetings were another popular way of starting some of the churches.

Of the wives who are the respondents in this research, 50% are professionals, but they are not theologically trained. Most of the wives are between the age groups of thirty to forty and have children from as young as two years old to seventeen years old. From

³Enoch Sanford Cornwall and Kadiana Ramballi, *From Obscurity to Prominence: The Inspiring Journey Into the Life and Ministry of Bishop Enoch Cornwall* (Kingston, Jamaica: Lithomedia Printers, 2012), 90.

discussion they would say it has its challenges but at the same time it is rewarding, in the sense that one is standing with God's servant, who has a passion to lead and give godly counsel. For those who are not working wives, while giving support to their husbands they seize the opportunity to launch out in other areas for self-development and community involvement.

Description of Instrument

The collecting of information for a research paper has to be precise according to the different approaches discussed in the Research Methodology course. This can be done when there is an understanding of the purpose and the specific techniques needed for developing one's research. The research will employ a questionnaire and focus group as it seeks to gather its data.

Questionnaire

The collection of the data will be done through a questionnaire which is developed and designed from a background of life experiences, being a pastor's wife for approximately twenty years. The content of the questionnaire comes from observations and from conversations and interaction with pastors' wives at various national events across the three-hundred-plus churches in Jamaica. As the wife now serving in ministry alongside my husband who is the national administrative bishop, I share an affinity to these pastors' wives who make up this demography. The respondents will be the twenty one pastors' wives within St. Catherine East, the parish of my focus. The advantages of using this instrument is that it allows for confidentiality and anonymity, which respects

each person's privacy. The disadvantages are that the instrument allows dishonesty, and the different interpretations of the questions prevent some respondents from answering some questions.

Focus Group

Data will also be gathered via a focus group that will be guided by a moderator who is the wife of a parish administrative bishop. The group participants are selected with a view to extract timeless stories which will explore the many challenges experienced along the ministry journey in several different contexts. The advantages of using this instrument are that it will elicit greater emotional responses. The discussions being done in a supportive environment with similar persons will also enable the identifying of different dispositions, tones, attitudes, and personalities. There is great benefit to be derived from facial expressions and body language. One is also able to gather much more information as the group members are telling their stories. The disadvantages will speak to the sometimes sensitive nature of the topics being discussed which sometimes will not allow freedom of speech. There is also a set time for the duration which prevents lengthy discussions.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

A questionnaire was done comprising of sixteen questions that were both open-and close-ended. These were distributed to individual pastors' wives to be done and returned within a three-week period. However, the time allotted seemed not to be

sufficient as the return of questionnaire took longer than expected. Of the fifteen questionnaires distributed, only eleven were returned.

Responses to Questions

In response to question 1, see figure 1. For the close-ended part of the question and following the figure will be the responses for the open-ended section.

Q. 1. Do you see the church's interpretation of a wife as helper as the proper biblical interpretation? If yes, what has been your experience?

From the findings 73% agrees that the church understands the true biblical interpretation of the word *helper*. Only 9% say no, and 18% feel that church gets it right only sometimes.

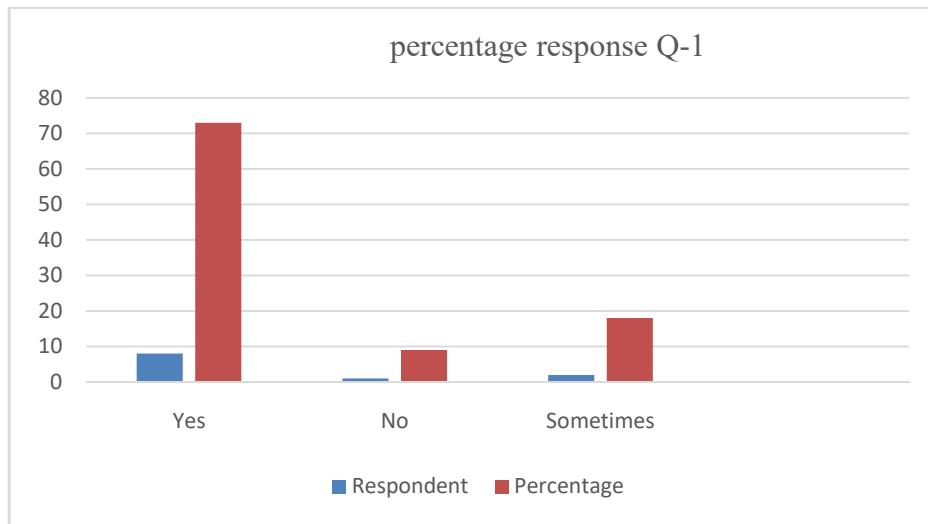


Figure 1: Percentage Response to Question 1

If yes, what has been your experience?

Eight of the respondents said yes, one said no, and another said somewhat. There was an overwhelming response that the church has very high expectations of the wives.

The wives say that the church's interpretation is similar to Scripture. They too support the Bible's rendering and agree with the biblical interpretation to complement their husbands. There is a wide acceptance by the wives that the Bible makes it clear about wives being helper.

In response to question 2, see figure 2.

Q. 2. Is it your belief that Church of God of Prophecy's interpretation of the wife as helper is similar to the biblical reference as helper in Gen. 2:18? If yes, explain.

This question is similar to question 1, where a resounding 73% believe that the church got the interpretation correct for helper. However, given the biblical reference only 55% say yes and 45% say no. It would seem that a few respondents did not relate the two questions.

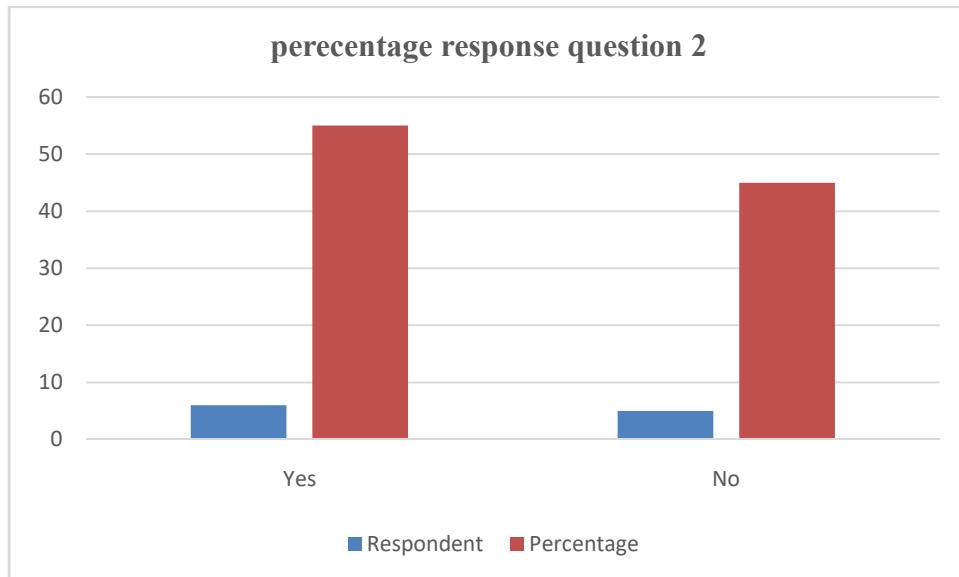


Figure 2: Percentage Response to Question 2

If yes, explain.

There was almost even yes and no reaction by the respondents with three undecided. Again, the congregational response is the driving force behind the respondents' answers. There seems to be an unrealistic expectation that does not give individuality to the pastor and family. However, while giving credence to the biblical views, some wives are not afraid to say that they do not see it the way the church sees it.

In response to question 3, see figure 3.

Q. 3. As a pastor's wife do you see yourself as an ordinary church member, just a church member, or your husband's covenanted helper? Why or why not?

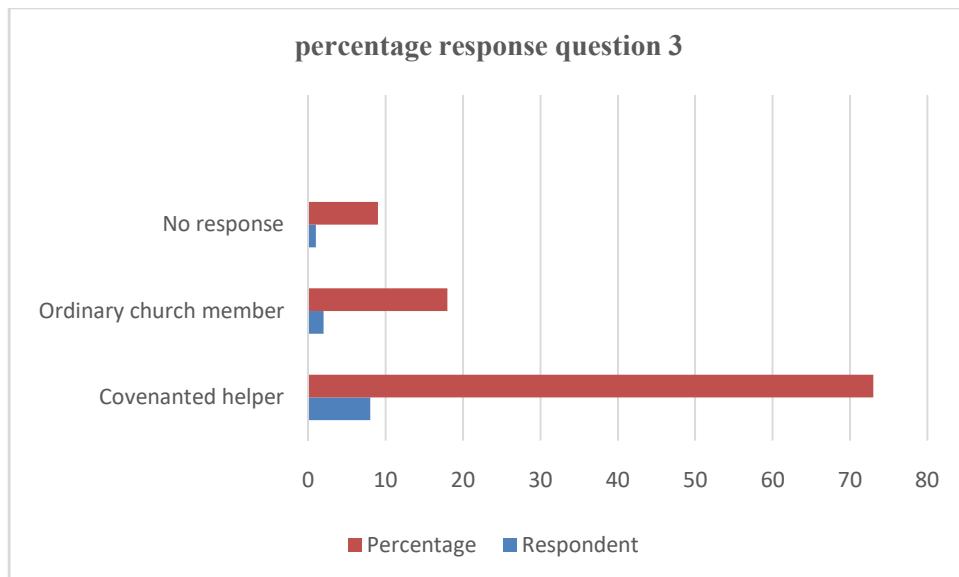


Figure 3: Percentage Response to Question 3

Of the wives, 73% see themselves as covenanted helper, 18% as an ordinary member, and 9% did not respond. A total of 27% of the wives seem to be having distorted beliefs about their position as a wife.

Why or why not?

Eight respondents see themselves as covenant helpers, as the marriage vows demands. It is interesting that their acceptance of being a covenant helper is not on the basis of the pastoral position; according to one of the wives, she did not marry a pastor, just a man who is sold out to God. No doubt it was on that very premise that his vocation became the answer to his calling. It is also believed that outside of being a covenanted helper the accepted role through marriage would be compromised. Two respondents saw themselves as ordinary members; to one it relieves her of the pastoral pressure. To the other, both were not ordained by the church; only her husband was ordained.

In response to question 4, see figure 4.

Q. 4. What things do you give up, if any, in your normal life in order to effectively play your role as a pastor's wife?

Most of the wives indicated that they have to give up their time in order to play an effective role as a pastor's wife (64%), while 27% say they have to give up nothing. One of the respondents mentioned that she lost the opportunity to migrate.

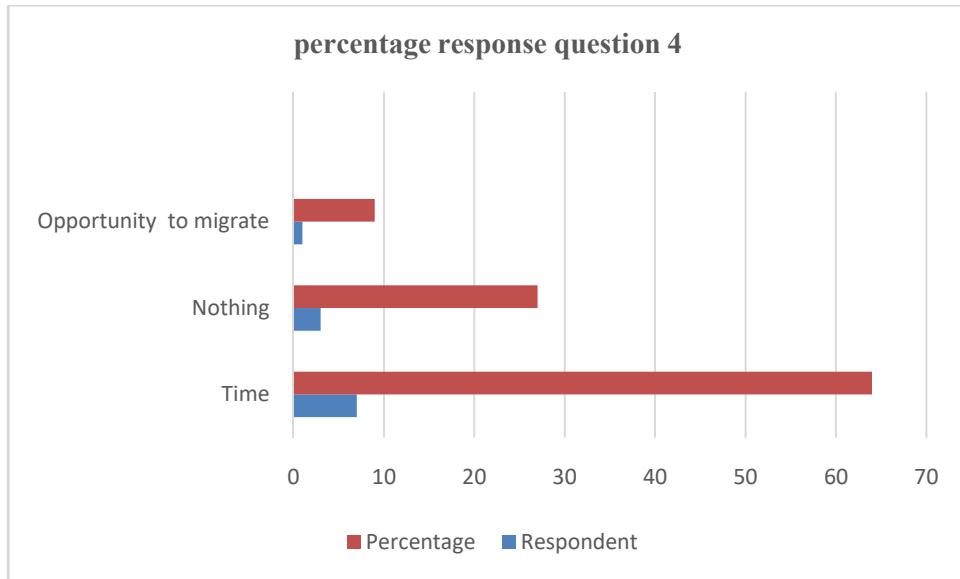


Figure 4: Percentage Response to Question 4

The sacrifice of time was largely the cause of destruction in the marital relationship and the breakdown of family recreational activities. Church demands were being satisfied to the detriment of the family structure. Opportunities for trips are nonexistent; one wife even thinks self is sacrificed in order to give value to her husband's ministry. Two respondents were not prepared to say anything. The overall scenario is all based on church pressure, culture, and the expectation of the church.

Question 5 is an open-ended question.

Q. 5. What are the lived experiences resulting from the pressures of the Church of God of Prophecy culture or their ministry expectations?

The nature of this question, whether based on interpretation or a culture that speaks to tradition, resulted in three respondents not giving any answers. The other eight see the church expectations as outweighing what one's ability allows one to do. This in a lot of ways prevents the willingness to interact. The bondages as a result of tradition and

the high expectations of the church cause severe pressure. There are still the two whose goal is please God, husband, and then others. The reaction from one who is not a typical Church of God of Prophecy wife is likely to face rejection.

In response to question 6, see figure 5.

Q. 6. Do you think you are living up to your church's expectations as a pastor's wife? If yes, what are some of the expectations?

Of the wives, 64% are living up to their church's expectation while 36% say they are not.

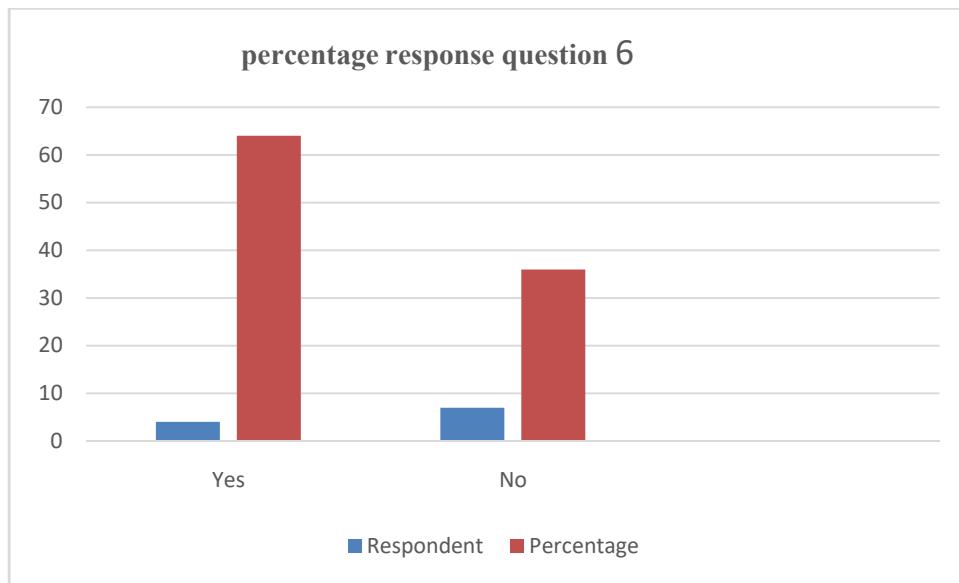


Figure 5: Percentage Response to Question 6

If yes, what are some of the expectations?

There was quite a mixed reaction with four saying yes, as they are actively involved in ministry in support of their husbands. One wife does only for visibility, which amounts to personal issues. The respondents who say no are similar in their thoughts; two

are not sure of their involvement. This is due to the extreme expectations of the church. The decision is therefore to please God instead of trying to be like the pastor, which leaves no place for one's individual personality. The other thought is to focus on family while working feverishly to protect one's children from church pressure and eventually grow to appreciate members without living by their expectations.

In response to question 7, see figure 6.

Q. 7. Do you believe that your relationship with your husband places you in a uniquely vulnerable position? Explain this vulnerable position.

Most wives feel that based on their position they are placed in a vulnerable position (73%); only 27% do not feel the same way.

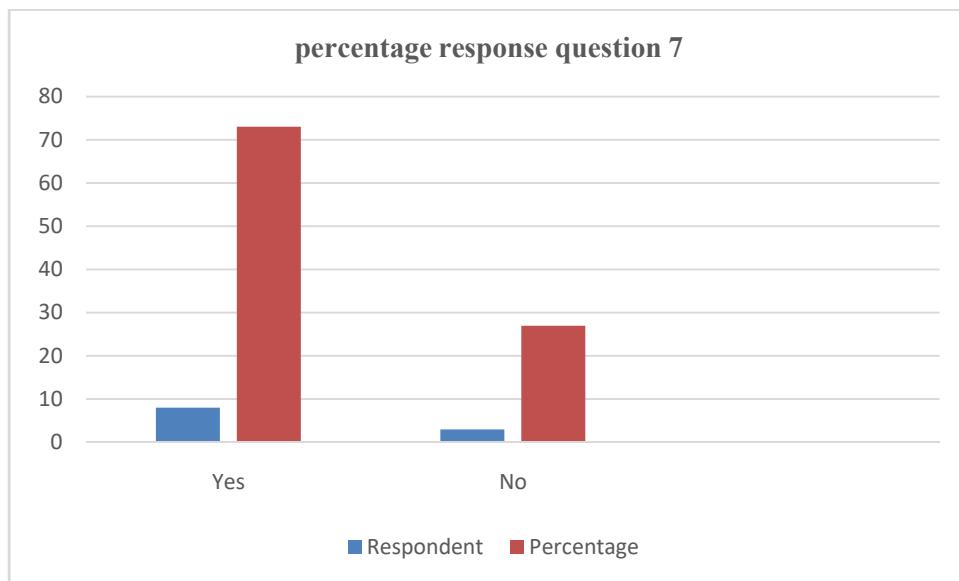


Figure 6: Percentage Response to Question 7

Explain this vulnerable position.

Eight of the respondents said yes to feeling vulnerable, as the wife is always on display, not expected to have any dominance, is expected to attend every event or face resentment if she does not attend. The wife is recognized as the next in line whenever the members do not want to face the pastor with certain issues.

There is the church's perception of the wife, which is a result of how the church perceives the husband to be. The vulnerability goes even further if his leadership style is not always popular and attracts negative criticism; the wife is quite uncomfortable listening to criticism being hurled at her husband.

Being the key figure in his life makes a wife a victim of malicious gossip, sneaky innuendo, impossible expectations, and possible pastoral frustration. The wife is constantly under the microscope being scrutinized and expected to be the standard bearer, which is not possible at all times. Three wives do not care, as their husbands are quite protective of them and would never allow them to feel vulnerable. However, they are quite willing to cooperate where possible.

Question 8 is another open-ended question.

Q. 8. What has been your experience as it relates to pressure from members' expectations and/or church traditions?

Again, there are mixed responses from the respondents, as four of them have had challenging times, especially regarding the wearing of pants and hats. The demands from church were summed up as frustrating and unreasonable both to the pastor and his family. The three who did not experience any challenges seemingly did not because their focus was on their children in order to keep them in church and on a marriage that suffered

because of members' expectation. Yet another goal was to be a Christian wife and to please God. Three respondents did not answer; nevertheless, one wife who suffered rejection initially was able to say since then things have changed.

Q. 9. How does it feel to suffer significantly or merely from unpopular decisions that your husband will sometimes make in leading the church?

There is significant commonality among the respondents here as they experience congregations that are good about making their experience a no-suffering one. For most, their husbands are supportive and willing to discuss unpopular decisions privately; whatever the backlash may be, they face it together. Despite the negative comments, because of the composed and calm nature of the husband the respondent is always able to look at the greater good.

The two respondents who suffered did so because of an uncomfortable feeling due to a strained relationship with the members. One was able to get on the road to recovery because she agreed and bonded with her husband. The other suffered some level of stress because when her husband is attacked she bleeds. This is however cushioned by her partner's wisdom in his statement that the Lord will help persons to buy into his vision. The respondents from this experience have learned to pull on grace.

Q. 10. What does it feel like to have an unwritten job description thrust upon you by the church or its members?

Five respondents make an added effort to serve graciously and are quite willing to say no if it becomes necessary. The church expectations really become burdensome at times as one becomes that respected wife when it is convenient for some members.

Though the process can be tedious, the respondents are willing to seek clarity and to employ coping mechanism.

The other six respondents in one instance objected, as the job description that the church enforces through unreasonable expectations is unwarranted. In other instances, one had a great level of resentment but that has since changed; one knew what is expected and was never bothered about enforced congregational job descriptions; and the other two had no problem saying no and do not allow the dictate of members to define who they are.

Q. 11. Describe how you feel to be shepherded by your husband in your area of ministry.

There is mixed reaction across the board, as it remains challenging for some at times due to the constant scrutiny and the usual nightmare of the unwanted and unwarranted job description. However, there are similarities of ease based on the wisdom of and good decision-making skills of the partners. Respondents are comfortable to be with them. With some ministry experiences one respondent would rather not have a pastor as a husband, but she acknowledges he is a good shepherd. One more respondent is proud that she married a pastor, as she is humbled by it. Leadership has another spin, as one respondent says she is pastored all the time. When dealing with ministry issues, she would much prefer to hear the voice of her husband and not of her pastor.

Q. 12. To what extent does your local church embrace your ministry?

The feeling of great acceptance and embrace is mutual across seven fronts where the respondents are experiencing enhanced relationships with members. With the husbands fueling the support of the congregation based on the church's overall vision, the

respondents' vision for ministry is not isolated but entwined. For three, however, there were pockets of rejection and resistance.

In response to question 13, see figure 7.

Q. 13. Was your husband a pastor before or after marriage? What would you change about the present situation if you could?

Most of these ladies' husbands became pastors after marriage (82%). Only 9% were pastors before marriage. Another 9% did not respond.

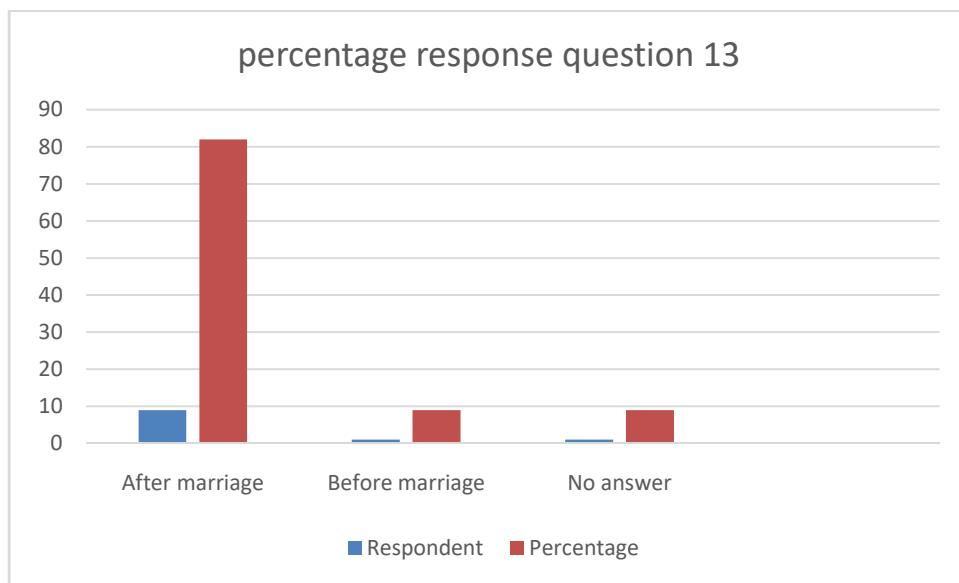


Figure 7: Percentage Response to Question 13

What would you change about the present situation if you could?

It is the feeling of three of the respondents that changing church location would make life easier. The others, however, felt if the opportunity would allow they would get more grooming for the task at hand and change the situation where there is hardly any

family time. One strongly feels things would have been different if the call to pastoral was accepted after having children.

In response to question 14, see figure 8.

Q. 14. How involved are you in your local church a. Strongly involved; b. Involved; c. Neutral; d. Less involved; e. No involvement.

Of the wives, 73% are strongly involved in their local church. Q total of 27% are either less involved, neutral, or just involved.

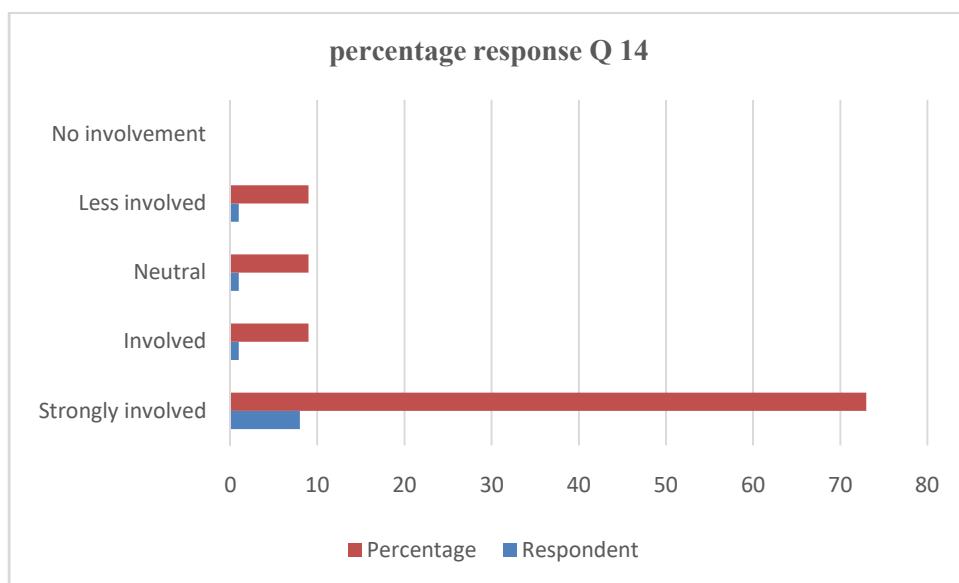


Figure 8: Percentage Response to Question 14

The next questions are open-ended.

Q. 15. If you are not involved in ministry with your husband, explain why or why not?

Except for two respondents who are involved, two were able to give reasons for their non-involvement based on not being equally ordained and due to a breakdown of the marital relationship. Five did not answer the question—the silence is still speaking.

Q. 16. What do you think the role of a pastor's wife in ministry should be?

Apart from one respondent who did not answer the question, all the others agree the role is being that of supporting their partner. The different areas of support are praying; assisting in the fulfilling of his calling; recognizing and honoring his emotional, moral, and physical needs; being a role model to members in conduct, attire, and deportment; assisting in the efficient organizing of the ministry; and providing companionship.

Report on Focus Group

Data were also gathered using a focus group which was guided by a moderator who is the wife of a parish administrative bishop. The group participants were selected from among those who did not respond to the questionnaire with a view to extract timeless stories which will explore the many challenges experienced along the ministry journey in several different contexts. It will also elicit greater emotional responses. The discussions were done in a supportive environment with similar persons, and this enabled the identifying of different dispositions, tones, attitudes, and personalities. Great benefit was derived from the facial expressions and body language.

Q. 1. Have you had seminary training? Yes or no. Describe its impact or its absence to your ministry.

The wives all had training at different levels under the church's leadership development program, Leadership Development Institute (LDI) and now New Covenant Bible Institute (NCBI). One respondent did external training and now holds a bachelor's degree in theology and Christian life but most did not have seminary training.

Based on the training, respondents were better able to adjudge matters objectively. Better application of the Scriptures was done as against emotional responses. Others benefitted spiritually and even learned the proper way of responding to their husbands in public in varied situations. Others also shared about being better able to assist in the administrative functions of the church. The spiritual growth experienced amounted to the gaining of knowledge that was most notable.

In the height of the discussion, one of the respondents shared one of her experiences. She was scheduled to preach one morning on the topic "Husbands, love your wives" and was led to read Eph 5, which she always read from the King James Version. This time she read from the Amplified Version and was ministered to in a different way based on the context and use of the word *submitting*. She had to accept that what she thought was a good job of being a wife was much to be desired.

Q. 2. What are your views on the popular belief that the pastor's wife's calling rests in the area of being wife, homemaker, and mother?

One respondent who served in the double role of wife and co-pastor said she was always seen as a wife beside a strong husband. The gifting and calling in me was never seen, she said, and as a result resistance came from many persons including her husband,

who wanted a wife and not a minister. The respondent shared that she was called by the Lord to go and help her husband in ministry. She perceived that to be so because of her very strong administrative skills. The respondent did not realize that shortly thereafter her husband would have suffered a stroke and she would have to help.

Interestingly there is fresh thinking on the horizon, as one respondent believes that the stereotype role of homemaker is for an older person in ministry. But in the present day that thinking and the expectations are different as they pertain to wifely roles and much more is needed. Yet for another the expectation is more than a wifely role. This respondent's experience is that people expect pastors' wives to be head of ministries that are not even within their calling.

The reality is not common in all congregations, as this respondent is expected to be the fill-the-gap for the pastor; that is, being able to preach in the pastor's absence and picking up and dropping off members at different locations after the service. For her the homemaker aspect is still alive and well in her congregation.

Q. 3. Would you say it's the church's responsibility to have mentoring/training sessions for the preparation of wives in support of their husband's ministry? Why or why not?

The answer was like a chorus, sung by all the respondents. One continued by saying it seems the roles are made up as one goes along. Having workshops with mentorship-focused presentation would help the conflicts that wives experience. Training in child rearing would also be beneficial. To this suggestion, another respondent asked whether there is a profile as to the right behavior of wives. The respondent agrees that

guidance to wives by way of mentoring is good. But training may be too formal and may well be creating molds that can cause further issues.

There is consensus where the mentorship program is concerned; however, one respondent pointed out the importance of putting mentor and mentee together based on their personality. “There are times when I think I see a little too much,” said one respondent. “I even want to address some situation at times but refuse to because it may seem like my motive is to prove the point that I am the wife of the pastor.” There was a quick response to this comment from another respondent: “As the pastor’s wife you do have authority.” She continued, “There was a problem with a particular mode of dressing which I reported to my pastor husband and he said, with an attitude, that’s your area; you need to walk in your authority.”

At this time all the respondents chorused, “There are always challenges,” as emotion was all over the room. One respondent said at times a wife sees that support is needed in a particular area but the husband does not see it. “At times things are pointed out to my husband and he will answer by saying, ‘You are my wife, so go ahead and address it.’ However, the members may not see me as having that authority.” In support of the arguments of a wife’s authority another respondent reiterated that if the husband has given the authority, then go ahead. Yet another respondent pointed out it is important for the congregation to also be aware that the husband gives that authority.

Q. 4. Describe your service: whether it's based on your calling and/or based on congregational needs.

There was a feeling across the board that congregational needs are of great importance. One respondent would do whatever it takes to make church happen, but it

also worthy to note that sticking to one's area of calling is vital. Another shared experience is that some members call on the pastor's wife for everything. One respondent shared and got the nod from the entire group as it relates to the structure of the congregation. Where the membership can operate with different skills, then the demand on the pastor's wife is much less.

Q. 5. Would you say your ministry is supported both emotionally and spiritually by your husband? Explain.

One respondent said her ministry is fully supported by her husband. She further explained that even when things seemed not to be going as well with her team members (that is, co-directors), her husband still fully supported her. She mentioned that at times, ideas were suggested.

Another shared that she has the full support of her husband as well. Ministry at her local church was never easy, but doing ministry with her husband has really helped her. She mentioned that she and her husband started praying together, which allowed them to understand each other better. He was never one to talk about certain issues; however, when he realized that she was under great pressure and that her actions spoke to her having no interest of remaining at the church and being almost ready to leave, she was encouraged greatly by her husband to stay. They now share in ministry together. He would start to speak and listen more. She said she had a lot of insights that her husband could not see. She got the opportunity to share those insights with him, which allowed them to grow emotionally and grow together spiritually. She then added that she accepted her local church to be ministry and tries to love the congregation purely. She also mentioned that she appreciates ministry for the things she has learned.

The oldest respondent in the group encouraged the wives to love people in spite of their attitudes or behavior and always try to cause a change in the way they react to the people. She then shared that she was supported but only to a certain extent. She recalled attending a business meeting where a question was asked about the problems in the church. She was then identified as the problem, which was very hurtful. She mentioned that she was expecting that her husband would have intervened, but he said nothing. She expressed that she was thankful for the Holy Spirit who gave her comfort and encouraged her.

Another, similar experience was shared by yet another respondent. She explained that her husband is not confrontational and whenever a conflict or a situation arises, she would expect to be defended or supported, but he does not. She is constantly compared with her husband. The respondent recalled that she accompanied her husband on a mission trip where surprisingly he objected when asked to do something. She said the people responded with shock, and she was blamed because it was said that she changed her husband as he was not known to be such a man. She added that sometimes decisions are made without her knowing; therefore, she does not feel that she is supported emotionally. She can even remember several occasions where she is ignored by members in the presence of her husband. The motherly respondent of the group, not necessarily in age but in experience, reminded the respondent that she is a Christian first, before a pastor's wife, so she should be encouraged and try not to cling to hurt that can make her bitter but to get better from each situation. She further encouraged that she should still serve her husband based on his needs, whether it be emotional, physical, or sexual.

The conversation that continued across the room was in support of each other. One respondent acknowledged that emphasis is usually placed on the pastor and the wife treated as an afterthought, which should not be. Another respondent said if the pastor set the precedent that persons respect their wives, things would be better. While appreciating all that encouragement, the respondent said transitioning into a pastor's wife was very difficult. She explained that her husband does not want to hurt the sheep; however, hurting her seems okay as long as the sheep are fine.

Pastors' children are another sore point, said one respondent. She encouraged her husband not to reprimand their children in front of the church or allow church members to get between their families. She said it can be very embarrassing to the children. Other respondents who are mothers shared the same sentiment.

A final comment from one respondent was that she is supported spiritually in ministry; however, there is not so much support emotionally. She mentioned that she thinks it is difficult for her husband to respond accordingly whenever a situation arises. He usually leaves the issue, but she would prefer if he responded.

Q. 6. Do you believe the Church of God of Prophecy is a male- or female-dominated denomination? Please give an explanation for your answer.

One respondent started by saying she thinks that the Church of God of Prophecy is a male- and not a female-dominated denomination. She mentioned that more men are pastors and in ministry and she prefers it that way. She expressed that she endorses male leadership, in general, because women tend to be too emotional. She explained that she does not think she could become a pastor because of her emotions. She further added that women do a lot generally and therefore men should lead the church. She also mentioned

that the Bible tells us that men are the head of the household and so she firmly believes in male leadership. She said that there is need for male leaders to mentor boys.

There was agreement by the next respondent, who also said that the church is male-dominated. She mentioned that the ratio is 2:1 in leadership, based on research that she did. She expressed, however, that it would be good to strike a balance between male and female. She shared the same sentiment: males tend to be less emotional but she would love to see more females aspire to leadership. She added that to be a wife and female in leadership is very strenuous. It was a consensus across the room that Church of God of Prophecy is male-dominated in relation to leadership and they have no issue and actually love it that way.

The focus group was substantive; it provided invaluable data that support the research question. Both the quantitative and qualitative instruments will be further summarized in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Summary of Findings

The experiences shared through this investigative journey brought with it differences along with many similarities; these will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs in this summary. Therefore, countless stories that represented varying degrees of experiences will become apparent. These interviewees were representative of a group of called-out ladies who have expectations for future life-changing ministries not unique to this group but to women in general.

The aim of my study is to provide a framework for teaching women who are preparing for ministry and also to provide guidelines to pastors' wives who are already in ministry. I found that the extent of the impact as it relates to the challenges varied on the basis of the culture of the different congregation. One of the themes that emerged from my analysis of the church's response to the ministry of the wife of the pastors was one of great acceptance. The findings along with this particular theme suggest that the pastor is a strong motivational factor to the congregation being impacted by the wife's ministry.

The questions from the questionnaire were both quantitative and qualitative. These are the questions that drive the need for the research and support of the needed intentions of the researcher.

Questionnaire Findings

To What Extent Does Your Local Church Embrace Your Ministry?

A majority of the wives, in the questionnaire (respondents) as well as the focus group (participants), indicated that there was a feeling of great acceptance and their ministries were being embraced within their local churches; respondents also noted experiencing enhanced relationship with members. There is the belief that if the husbands fuel the support of the congregation based on the church's overall vision, the respondents' vision for ministry instead of being isolated will be intertwined with the overall vision of the church. Where there were pockets of rejection and resistance the participants showed some signs of willingness to try to work in harmony regardless of whatever small pockets of resistance and personality difference remain.

Recalling that the role of pastors' wives in the ministry is important, particularly as it relates to the support of their husbands, it is commendable that the participants decided to work in harmony regardless of whatever opposition they may face, as maintaining good relationships with members is critical to the success of their husbands ministry.

What Things Do You Give Up, If Any, in Your Normal Life in Order to Effectively Play Your Role as a Pastor's Wife?

The need for prioritizing along with finding the right balance with family life and commitment to the church was a strong issue. There was a clear indication that the wives realized and accepted that there had to be a clear plan and management structure in place for the proper running of the church overall. However, commitment to family time was

either nowhere in the picture or vaguely in the picture. The responses from the respondents were almost unanimous, in that the wives were more concerned with working alongside their husbands to ensure a well-organized church was priority.

In assessing their responses I found the ladies were still trying to work with their current situation although it may not be ideal, and this again strengthens my view of the need for guidance for these ladies which will no doubt affect ministry in all general areas. The overall thinking is that after giving up family time, vacation trips, and recreational activities and spending time with extended families; most pastors' wives need guidance on how to function effectively and efficiently alongside their husband in ministry and as a wife, homemaker, and mother. This will also ensure that they are not lost in the whole process.

The respondents' willingness to give up even what some termed as great opportunities, such as offers to migrate to other countries and spend time with parents at Christmas, are testimonies of their support to their husbands. They believe that these sacrifices would add value to his ministry and make him more effective. This finding is supported by Anderson, who states, "There are rare cases where a man can be successful in the pastorate without his wife's encouragement and support. Those cases, however, are the exception rather than the rule."¹

What Are the Lived Experiences Resulting from the Pressures of the Church of God of Prophecy Culture or Their Ministry Expectations?

Another strong theme that emerged from my analysis was the challenges and pressure faced by the pastor's wife. Pressure and challenges emerged from the unrealistic

¹Robert C. Anderson, *The Effective Pastor* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 72.

expectations of the members which were developed based on their uninformed perceptions. These perceptions also guided the members' expected roles and responsibilities of the wives. What I found was that there was a tendency across different congregations to assign specific job descriptions to the pastor's wife, which resulted in wives losing their identity while suffering great rejection.

It was a consensus that the church's expectations most times far outweighed what the wife was able to give. The escape route for majority of the respondents was to deliberately avoid interaction with the members to get away from the pressure and unrealistic expectations. One wife had vowed never to marry a pastor based on the obvious neglect and insensitivity experienced by the wife of her then pastor—only to thereafter have her husband appointed as a pastor. The wives are expected to be very understanding while the husband tends to the needs of his congregation. The respondents all agreed that the membership has the pastor on twenty-four-hour call.

Do You Believe That Your Relationship with Your Husband Places You in a Uniquely Vulnerable Position?

The findings suggest that the respondents agree that being a pastor's wife definitely makes them vulnerable. They see themselves as the key figure in the life of their husband, and as a result, they suffer much scrutiny and criticism. The respondents become victims of malicious gossip, sneaky innuendo, and backlash from frustrations with the expected standard bearer, which is not possible all the time.

The congregation for the most part seems not to care whether the pastor's wife hears their negative criticisms or not. It is an overall agreement that regardless of the

situation, wives cannot fight back. I believe that the eight respondents spoke for all others, that in order to protect their husbands, they all kept silent as the pain magnified.

How Does It Feel to Suffer Significantly or Merely from Unpopular Decisions That Your Husband Will Sometimes Make in Leading the Church?

I found that there is strong belief that whatever decisions are made by the pastor, anger is meted out to wives because to the members it is a foregone conclusion that the wife is a party to the decision. The findings suggest that where the pastor displays public support and validation for the wife, there is no suffering whatsoever. Instead, what is found is a personality that ignores the negative reactions, comments, and disparaging remarks made by the congregation. It is clear that a calm and composed nature handles situations differently. A comment by one respondent is worth noting: “He doesn’t always get it right, but doesn’t let negatives bother him much because he really loves people and tries to act in the best interest of his members and for the greater good. Therefore both of us are spared in a sense because if he is good then it helps me to be good too.”

Focus Group Findings

The purpose of bringing the pastors’ wives together was for support of each other and for each to take advantage of the energies produced when sharing from the heart. The participants got comfortable after about fifteen minutes into what I would describe as wholesome confrontations with real, meaningful conversations.

In a denomination that has leadership development as a core value it was quite promising to hear the participants all speaking of the spiritual growth and knowledge gained as a result of seminary training.

Have You Had Seminary Training?

I found that the participants all had some form of Bible school training from within the church, and one had seminary training. It was clear that the participants are in support of training for ministry preparation, as their confidence level were all boosted by the improved ability in the correct application of the Word. The cross-cultural experience in the Bible school classes came up for mention, and the findings suggest that the challenges that pastors' wives experience in the Church of God of Prophecy are not unique to the different parishes or to other denominations.

The participants noted that their training, though limited for some to the church's Bible school, assisted them in their responses to the many challenges they faced as a pastor's wife. In particular, their improved application of the Word made it easier in demonstrating love and understanding even in the face of opposition. This is most important as it relates to the wives playing a supportive role to their husband, and by extension making his ministry more effective.

What Are Your Views on the Popular Belief That the Pastor's Wife's Calling Lies in the Area of Being Wife, Homemaker, and Mother?

It is the general belief of these participants that a wife is a homemaker and mother. While it is acceptable to be seen as wife, homemaker, and mother, there is a clear

preference that these ladies would like to be seen with ministry responsibilities and with a gifting and calling. What I found was zero tolerance for the stereotypical role of wives being homemakers. The shared experiences were that much more is expected, and for some the expectation goes outside of the home. From the discussions I found that some of the wives found being the wife at church was frowned on by members, and at times it was easier just act as a regular member. The participants showed some level of spiritual maturity as they conceded to not only being mother at home but also to the congregation where the needs arises.

Would You Say Your Ministry Is Supported Both Emotionally and Spiritually by Your Husband?

The participants believed it would be a good thing if it were so, because the pastor has to set the pace for how the congregation views the wife. However, the discussions proved that emotional support is lacking. Affirmation by the pastor is definitely the way to go because the participants believe the pastor is a strong motivational factor to their ministry. This is in keeping with the overall vision of the church. I found that the wives did not want the congregation to have a perception of the husband's support but that there must be an awareness by the church that the husband was in support of her ministry. And they all hoped that their husbands would verbally and physically demonstrate support of them to the congregation. It came across finally that the expectation of the husband for an impactful ministry would be most demanding on them. It is therefore clear that the role of the pastors' wives is most critical to the successful ministry of their husbands. They are

therefore not mere figures who sit in the shadows but must become active participants and contributors to the success of his ministry.

Do You Believe the Church of God of Prophecy Is a Male- or Female-Dominated Denomination?

A resounding yes came from all the participants. But yes in which direction? When pressed, the participants clarified their response to say that the church is male-dominated with regard to leadership. The discussions confirmed that leadership is male-dominated but the congregations are female-dominated. There is a clear preference for male leadership among the participants, as the belief is that women have enough work to keep them busy. There is also the belief that this is the way God intended leadership to be. From discussion, it seemingly is a foregone conclusion that women make great leaders; however, the participants agree that the man is the head and this enforces their bias.

I found that the concluding thoughts were centered on appreciation for more females aspiring to leadership, as there has got to be a balance. There is a clear preference for male leadership with supportive arguments about the great need for the mentoring of boys. This discussion is relevant to the thesis, as the role of the pastor's wife is more than a mere support or sidekick. The pastor's wife is a leader in her own right and an active participant in her husband's ministry.

Assessment of Responses in View of Research Outlined in the Literature Review

The findings gathered from my questionnaire and focus group are consistent with the arguments put forth by several of the writers discussed in the literature review; it would appear that the writers and my respondents and participants shared experiences born out of similar experiences. It is important to note that my respondents and participants must learn to fulfill the role as pastors' wives in the COGOP, St. Catherine East, as that is where they have been placed to serve. According to one of the participants, she learned very early in ministry as a pastor's wife to bloom where she was planted, as God must have had a purpose for her to be called to serve in that local congregation at that specific time. In essence, running from one local congregation to another will change the issues; given the responses to my questionnaire and the focus group discussion, the issues are the same regardless of the congregation. According to Aida Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, who support this proposition, "There is no substitute for risk and courage in situations that are oppressive or forbidding in their openness to the use of women gifts."²

If these pastors' wives were to run from the challenges, they would be showing themselves to be weak, and this runs counter to their role as pastors' wives, which required that they demonstrate strength of purpose and character. It is even suggested that for the pastors' wives of St. Catherine East, Jamaica, to move to a different location may be interpreted as rebellion. However, I would disagree with any such assertion, as the struggles they experience are palpably real, particularly when one appreciates that some of them became a pastor's wife after marriage. But to be a leading lady and function

²Aida Besançon Spencer, William David, Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, *Global Voices on Biblical Equality: Women and Men Serving Together in the Church*, House of Prisca and Aquila series (Eugene, OR:Wipf & Stock, 2008), 207.

effectively in support of their husband's ministry, these wives must rise above the challenges and stand firm in the strength of the God who called them into this special ministry.

There is still the tendency of trying too hard to please everyone, and as a result the pastors' wives of St. Catherine East are struggling greatly not just to fit into their roles but also to be who God wants them to be. Although 80% of my respondents have stepped into the role of being a pastor's wife after marriage, their response to question 13 of the questionnaire was not very different from the remaining 20%. As outlined in chapter 4 of this thesis, regarding the question, "What would you change about the present situation if you could?" the majority of the respondents confirmed they would rather stay and face the challenges, whereas three wives would opt for a change of location.

The response of the majority confirms the strength and willingness of the Jamaican wives. The 80% of wives who attained their position after marriage would have been unprepared for this calling, but as strong leading ladies, they have chosen not to make this an hindrance but to see their position of awesome responsibility as a privilege entrusted to them by God. Notwithstanding, the focus group participants all felt that some amount of training or preparation would have been useful to assist them to better fill the role of a pastor's wife. The purpose of the research is further strengthened here where it is suggested that there needs to be a deliberate effort in preparing these wives for their responsibilities. The Jamaican concept of the church providing healing for everyone has got to change from a perception to reality. As a church, the COGOP Jamaica should endeavor to bring healing where it is needed, in this case to our pastors' wives; and where possible prevent future pastors' wives from experiencing such challenges and hurt.

This notion of wives having issues with church members or family issues is not new, neither is it unique to Jamaicans; but as I made reference to Katy Tangenberg, who has been among wives and mothers who are not able to satisfy and balance the demands the church, her husband, and family all at the same time has said that “women who are wives and/or mothers . . . may feel pressured to conform to expectations of submission and high standards of parenting and home management. Fear of criticism or rejection can often prevent women from disclosing family or marital problems.”³

There is an overhanging question as it relates to moving from one location to another; the analysis of the data captured in figure 7 (chapter 4) does seem to make this same question worthy of other reactions. The issue of moving to another church did not seem to make sense with one pastor’s wife, as in Peter Scazzero’s book, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, which tells of a wife who was tired of raising their four girls by herself while her husband pastored the church. While her decision to quit the church caught her husband’s attention, the silent decision of some pastors’ wives in Jamaica to do the same might not have caught the attention of many Jamaican pastors.

This struggle illustrates the importance of balance in ministry and family life, a theme that rang loudly during the research process. While this research is focused on the role of pastors’ wives and their need to find balance, it is clear that the pastor must also find balance. Scazzero’s statement is apt, when he said, “And if I could not maintain the boundaries necessary to keep the pressure of church leadership from negatively impacting our marriage, I would gladly resign my position.”⁴ It was clear from the very

³Katy Tangenberg, “Culture, Social Relationships, and Self-Perceptions of Pentecostal Women,” *International Social Work* 50, no. 2: (2007): 237-38.

⁴Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 85.

emotional responses that the participants believe it is too common for pastors to miss the all-important issue that their partners face, that is, the challenge to balance their responsibilities as wife, mother, and church member. The answer, says one participant sadly, is to leave church or even leave marriage alone.

The percentage response to question 6 of the questionnaire, “Do you think you are living up to your church’s expectations as a pastor’s wife?” is borne out in figure 5, which gives data that reveals that 64% of the wives believe they are living up to their church’s expectation while 36% say no. With the higher percentage being wives who are on par with what is expected may mean there are wives who are getting more comfortable with their roles. From the data there seem to be congregations with more skilled members who are able and willing to take on duties that enhance the ministry, which makes it less demanding for the pastor’s wives.

These findings are in harmony with those of researchers such as Judith Hylton, whose book title also encompasses the whole idea of the question, *Surviving in Ministry Yet Remaining in Love with God and His People*. One statement she made in support was, “As a pastor’s wife, you are called to stand with the congregation and pray for your husband, their pastor.”⁵ From the findings there is a clear indication that the participants are not willing to allow the congregations expectation to control their lives.

Although there is a willingness to serve, one of the struggles that was highlighted in the discussions is the conservative view that still obtains both in leadership and among the congregants, where woman are still seen in traditional roles. In Hylton’s book she

⁵Judith S. Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife: Surviving in Ministry Yet Remaining in Love with God and His People*, Geneva Authors Shelf (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2012), 1.

challenged the wives of pastors to understand that it is unrealistic to try and please everyone, and one should give up any such ideal.

Lorna Dobson echoes the same sentiments regarding wives seeking to satisfy the church's expectation when she shared the story of Lucy, "the young wife of a minister, [who] was told by her visiting cousin that she should take piano lessons so that she could play for church services; that way if choir members quarreled, Lucy and her husband could sing and play and be 'it,' independent of such problems."⁶

Lucy's husband mirrored the husband of one of the participant who was never bothered by what the congregation thinks, as she had the full support of her husband. Lucy's husband said:

A minister's wife has no more call to public duty than any Christian woman in the congregation. In fact, he thinks she (the pastor's wife) ought never to hold such offices, because she is not a fixture and may leave the work just at a time when experience is a necessary factor to cope with circumstances, and the new officer might thus be put to disadvantage and the society suffer. Then, too, if she be capable and aggressive, some would say she wants to run everything, while if she is modest and self-deprecating and waits for others to suggest, these same fault-finders will say they hope the next minister's wife will be of some help to them.⁷

The findings suggest that right within the confines of the walls of our churches here in Jamaica are wives who have lost their focus and the reason for why they are in ministry because of superfluous congregational demands. The success of any ministry in the church is founded in the successful marriage and family life of the pastor and his wife.

⁶Lorna Dobson, *I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife: Authentic Living in a Fishbowl World*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 21.

⁷Dobson, *I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife*, 21.

Conclusion

The findings of the focus group suggest that the church congregations need to understand the importance of agreeing to the pastor's family time. It is also widely accepted that once the pastor's wife gains confidence, then opportunities for her own ministry are endless. The questions explored the church's responsibility to have mentoring/training sessions for the preparation of wives in support of their husbands' ministries; participants' service whether it is based on their calling and/or based on congregational needs; whether one's ministry is supported both emotionally and spiritually by one's husband; and is it the belief that the Church of God of Prophecy is a male- or female-dominated denomination.

I found that on the question of whether one had seminary or Bible school training, 80% of the participants benefited greatly from training and their ministries were enhanced. Their views on the popular belief that a pastor's wife's calling rests in the area of being wife, homemaker, and mother were one of passion versus expectations. The participants showed some enthusiasm for being wife to a called man of God and thankfulness for the privilege of motherhood. However, it was quite clear and they all agreed that they are much more than a pastor's wife and homemaker. The participants saw themselves as having much more options and opportunities than the duties list given them by the members. That the majority of the participants are of the working class all speaks to this fact.

The findings also highlight areas where the COGOP could be more supportive of wives. This is by giving attention to mentoring and training as a form of preparation for functioning in a supportive role to their pastor husbands. What I found is that there is

awareness about what the wives' contributions are in support of their husbands and by extension the church. Most see themselves in partnership with their husbands. Quite interestingly the participants showed clear preference for male leadership.

I believe that having been a pastor's wife for approximately twenty years and currently serving for seven years as the first lady for the island of Jamaica, it is necessary to say to these wives that training enhances their ministry and adds value to their husband's ministry and the church. I must also add that with all the enhancement, getting into the actual position brings with it elements of surprises that one is never prepared for. Hylton gave great encouragement in her statement: "Never try to predict or restrain how God will lead and work in your life. I often remind myself of Solomon's wisdom: The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps (Proverbs 16:9 ESV)."⁸

There is a picture of an ideal wife painted by many churches, which could be the new wave of the title "first lady." It is a picture of indispensability which puts the pastors' wives in the mold that Jamaican culture describes as a wife who is good, nice, and sweet. In reality a pastor's wife and family are not this way but are normal human beings with limitations like every other church member and must be accepted as such.

The focus group questions elicited great emotional responses. The discussions being done in a supportive environment with persons of similar experiences enabled the smooth flow of conversation and allowed the participants to identify easily with each other notwithstanding the different dispositions, tones, attitudes, and personalities. Great benefit was derived from facial expressions and body language. As the discussions swelled I found that the challenges were similar although their individual contexts varied.

⁸Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, loc. 716.

Amid the many challenges these ladies are all first believers in Christ with a mandate to fulfill the calling that they believe the Lord has placed on their lives. The information shared spoke to their very busy schedules, and yet they are all integrally involved in the different ministries of the church along with serving on various committees.

The research process allowed me to hear their hearts and concerns as well. They did not realize being a pastor's wife is the beginning of a new life of learning, how by entering into life of the congregations would shape their lives completely. The first ladies of St. Catherine East, so popularly called, are educators, business women, and administrators; a few have retired from secular jobs and are now fully graphed in the pastoral care ministries and the senior citizens ministry as directors.

The ladies are ready for the challenge and are not hindered by the present situation but are motivated by the vision of the church to bring transformation to people and by extension communities. Based on the findings mentioned earlier, they understand what it means to minister out of who one is, not what one does. Many of them were not prepared for their role of being the wife of a pastor, and their involvement in the various ministries of the church did not help either as their expectations of what they thought ministry would be was quite disappointing. One key element of their experience was that they have come to realize that ministry is about relationships and serving people.

Hylton, I believe, summed it up for the St. Catherine ladies:

A pastor's wife was not just married to a pastor; it was far more vocational than that, a way of life. It meant participation in an intricate web of hospitality, living at the intersection of human need and God's grace, inhabiting a community where men and women who didn't fit were welcomed, where neglected children were noticed, where the stories of Jesus were told, and people who had no stories found that they did have stories, stories that were part of the Jesus story. Being a

pastor's wife would place her strategically yet unobtrusively at a heavenly trafficked intersection between heaven and earth.⁹

Problems Arising During the Research

Initially the questionnaire should have been administered by telephone; however, there were persons who expressed concern of being identified. The ideal method I thought would be have this type of survey done anonymously, as persons would be more open to expressing themselves. The main problem was getting the wives to see this as important and urgent. My fear was realized when the instrument was not returned in a timely manner. The next problem was the research design. The open-ended nature of the instrument meant more time and effort went into the interpreting of the questions and then answering them. I believe this was the main factor in the timely return of the instruments. Of the twenty-one pastors' wives, eighteen participated: eleven from the questionnaire and seven from the focus group.

Recommendations

The church will continue to have its challenges, likewise the pastor. Pastoring is therefore not based on the functions of man's ideology but on the understanding that God is ultimately the chief Pastor/Shepherd, who promised to care for his people but called us (pastor and wife) to join with him in ministry. The pastors' wives in the COGOP in St. Catherine East, Jamaica, are able and ready to turn challenges into moments of learning and growth.

A collaborative effort and a transcendent vision are needed to be able to survive in pastoral ministry. It is important for the wives to look at their roles as relational and not

⁹Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, loc. 90.

just functional. A relational role will build an interpersonal relationship with congregants. From the survey there seems to have been a self-esteem problem as well. This could have been caused by guilt or anxieties from previous traumatic experiences in their earlier life. It was Chris Lowney who said, “I was afraid to be who I am.”¹⁰ However, if these wives are able to obtain counseling and receive healing, then they can truly become the leading ladies God intends them to be. As I make my recommendations the following points will be discussed: a mentorship program, seminars and conferences, and a community approach.

Mentorship

In order to assist the pastors’ wives to build their self-worth, instituting a mentorship program is a good consideration. For this to be effective it has to be instituted from the national level, then accepted and implemented, and then practiced. There was suggestive evidence from the focus group session, based on the sharing and testimonies of the more mature participant who played double role of pastor and pastor’s wife, to support this recommendation. One participant suggested that mentorship programs be instituted on local level, pairing persons based on personality where congregations could benefit from the experiences of role models like this senior participant.

Again the congregations can all learn from Hylton’s experience when she said:

Here I am sharing my pains, my struggles, my joys, and my sorrows with my new friends. At the end, I challenged the women to get involved in each other’s lives because deep inside this is what I was crying out for also. I remember speaking with intense passion about how God uses us to meet each other’s needs and how I

¹⁰Chris Lowney, *Pope Francis: Why He Leads the Way He Leads* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2013), 26.

could not have made it without the love and support of people in my church and women in my life.¹¹

My study offers suggestive evidence for stronger influence in father and son mentorship to prevent boys from leaving church at a certain age, which proved a nightmare for majority of the wives. Within the context of the community one wife suggested conducting community assessment and mapping confidentially. For this component the social outreach ministry could conduct a survey.

Precious Pearls Conference

The Precious Pearls Conference was created as an avenue for pastors' wives and female pastors to share their challenges and joys in ministry and in their personal lives. This conference came about as a result of my many hurts as a female minister and pastor's wife. The conference creates a space where the pastors' wives and female pastors can be women together without focusing on family and church.

This conference moves from the norm of basic retreats weekend women gatherings to being a proactive seminar aimed at empowering female leaders; wherein the wives get the opportunity to develop as they build trust and openness. The Conference becomes a support group where wives realize that fellow sisters are dealing with similar issues. By so doing wives may begin to think more objectively, providing an opportunity for solving some years old problem.

The worship sessions are organized to build up the spirituality of these ladies. Paul encouraged the wives of deacons and encouraged other wives as well: "Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things" (1 Tim 3:11,

¹¹Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor's Wife*, loc. 234.

New King James Version). There is a lot of baggage carried by many wives. I was one of them. As wives we serve Jesus Christ by serving people. “As we re-center our focus upon Him and the magnitude of His goodness, our need for value will flow from Him, out of relationship with Him as His daughter rather than that which we do for Him. And our inner sense of fulfillment comes from pleasing Him.”¹² Sky, a pastor’s wife, said, “You know you are the pastor’s wife when . . . you have the privilege of being an influencer for God in the lives of so many people, and let me also add, your confidentiality is trusted for someone to share their deepest secrets with you.”¹³ So seminars and conferences can build up our pastors’ wives, giving them an opportunity to offload their baggage and be rejuvenated.

Community Approach

There is the need also to give guidance to the married and unmarried of the communities in which the churches are located. The study also supported the argument for a change in the way we view the communities in which we worship and live. There needs to be deliberate engaging of these communities through social action. The church’s welfare department from a recent survey done at a local church in St. Catherine East confirmed that 50% of the food baskets given out fortnightly are given to women between the ages of twenty-five to forty years. The overall developmental plan will eventually engage the entire church in weeks of prayer to ascertain the correct approach.

It was recommended that the ladies in the church also include the women in the community at least once per month in the program. This component saw us engaging in

¹²Dianne Finkelde, *Conversations with a Pastor’s Wife: Timeless Stories Exploring the Challenges of Ministry Life* (Amazon Digital Services, 2015), Kindle ed., loc. 177.

¹³Finkelde, *Conversations with a Pastor’s Wife*.

conflict resolution, bringing better understanding to the role of the church in the community. Due to the complexity of the situation regarding the socialization that is unique to each family experiencing and getting to know the people is integral to the process of transformation. This approach speaks to the necessity to have the wives/woman of the church becoming the model mothers for the communities in which we do ministry. The way in which the church relates to the community is part and parcel of what it means to be Disciples of Christ. This initiative is important to get the ladies not only thinking about their wellbeing but that of others by looking beyond church boundaries and becoming that spiritual mother an influence which will bring a deeper sense of well being in the lives of our parishioners.

At this point in my research, I am resolute in my view that these leading ladies are called of God and serve in a position of great responsibility, which requires them to undergo much pressure; yet they stand with confidence and in the boldness of the Holy Spirit and embrace their role as pastors' wives with grace and humility. Pastors' wives must feel free to stand in their rightful positions of authority, as according to Gen 1:27 (New King James Version), "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." This is who she is. She stands in the image God, as bolstered by Prov 31 (New King James Version), where the character of the virtuous wife is praised: "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain . . . Strength and honor are her clothing . . . Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised." It is clear, however, that further mentorship, training, and understanding of their experiences are needed to bolster the

pastors' wives in my area of study. The sacrifices made by the pastors' wives are a testament of their commitment to the ministry and a willingness to serve God and his people. As the first lady of the nation I will continue with my endeavor through the Precious Peals Conference and in whatever other way I may be of assistance, so they can continue to fulfill their God-given call to ministry.

APPENDIX A
PASTORS' WIVES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

The condition of anonymity is important.

- Do you see the church's interpretation of a wife as helper as the biblical interpretation? If yes, what has been your experience?
- Is it your belief that Church of God of Prophecy's interpretation of the wife as helper similar to the biblical reference as helper in Gen 2:18? If yes, explain.
- As a pastor's wife do you see yourself as an ordinary church member, just a church member, or your husband's covenant helper? Why or why not?
- What things do you give up, if any, in your normal life in order to effectively play your role as a pastor's wife?
- What are the lived experiences resulting from the pressures of the Church of God of Prophecy culture or their ministry expectation?
- Do you think you are living up to your church's expectations as a pastor's wife? If yes, what are some of these expectations? If not, what are you not doing?
- Do you believe that your relationship with your husband places you in a uniquely vulnerable position? You should explain this vulnerable position.
 - If yes, why?
 - If no, explain.

- What has been your experience as it relates to pressure from members' expectations and/or church traditions?
- How does it feel to suffer significantly or merely from unpopular decisions that your husband will sometimes make in leading the church?
- What does it feel like to have an unwritten job description thrust upon you by the church or its members?
- Describe how you feel to be shepherded by your husband in your area of ministry.
- To what extent does your local church embrace your ministry?
- Was your husband a pastor before or after your marriage? And what would you change about the present situation if you could?
 - Before marriage
 - After marriage
- How involved are you in your local church?
 - Strongly involved
 - Involved
 - Neutral
 - Less involved
- No involvement

If you are not involved in ministry with your husband, explain why or why not?

- What do you think the role of a pastor's wife in ministry should be?

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

This focus group is selected with a view to extracting the timeless stories which will explore the many challenges experienced along the ministry journey in several different contexts.

- Have you had seminary training? Yes or no. Describe its impact on your ministry.
- What are your views on the popular belief that the pastor's wife's calling lies in the area of being wife, homemaker, and mother?
- Would you say it's the church's responsibility to have mentoring/training sessions for the preparation of wives in support of their husband's ministry? Why or why not?
- Describe your service, whether it's based on your calling and/or based on congregational needs.
- Would you say your ministry is supported both emotionally and spiritually by your husband? Explain.
- Do you believe the Church of God of Prophecy is a male- or female-dominated denomination? Please give an explanation for your answer.

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